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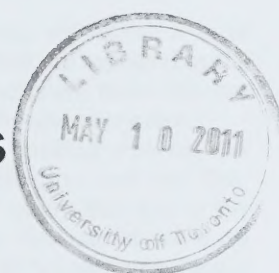
Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**



**Tuesday 3 May 2011**

**Mardi 3 mai 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 May 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 21, 2011, on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

Mr. Phillips has moved government notice of motion number 55. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred to the conclusion of question period for deferred votes.

*Vote deferred.*

## FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION

### ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from St. Catharines.

I'm happy to rise today to lead off on the second reading debate of the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, a bill to enact labour and employ-

ment amendments to part IV of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

I'm also pleased to be joined in leading off today's debate by my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

I know everyone in this House will join Minister Bradley and me in expressing our deepest gratitude to the firefighters of this province, in saying thank you to Ontario's firefighters for their hard work yesterday, today and tomorrow. It has been said that when someone becomes a firefighter, their greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What they do after that is all in the line of work.

As Ontario's Minister of Labour, my mission is to advance safe workplace practices that are essential to the well-being of Ontario's workers, including those like our firefighters who put their lives on the line every day.

Our government is committed to working with our fire safety partners to keep our communities and our firefighters safe. It is this concern for safety that was at the centre of the consultations with fire sector partners undertaken by both the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Ministry of Labour. This proposed legislation that resulted from these consultations will bring greater clarity and uniformity to the issue of mandatory retirement in the fire sector for the sake of firefighters, our fire services and the public they serve.

Speaker, you will know that prior to the introduction of Bill 181, a motion was passed in this House by unanimous consent on March 10, 2011. That motion, brought forward by our colleague the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, recognized the important role Ontario firefighters play every day in keeping our communities safe. The motion made mention of evidence of the increased health and safety risks to firefighters over the age of 60. It is also important to note that the motion reflects current practice and upholds a recent Human Rights Tribunal decision.

As I mentioned, that motion received all-party support in calling upon the Ontario government to introduce legislation to allow for the mandatory retirement of full-time firefighters who battle fires on the front lines. Today's proposed legislation under Bill 181 is the result of consultations that were initiated by request of this Legislature following unanimous consent to proceed.

The proposed legislation we are discussing today actually addresses two issues of concern to the fire community. The first is mandatory retirement, and the second addresses duty of fair representation. I will speak to both



this morning but will begin by addressing the proposed amendments around mandatory retirement for salaried firefighters regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.

In 2005, the Legislature eliminated mandatory retirement in Ontario for most employees with the passage of the Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005. That legislation amended the definition of age in the Human Rights Code to remove the upper age limit of 65 as it applied to discrimination in employment.

However, the Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act did not change the bona fide occupational requirement exception to the prohibition against discrimination in employment. To be clear, what this means is that the Human Rights Code continues to allow for mandatory retirement where age can be shown to be a bona fide occupational requirement. Importantly for the amendment we are discussing today, mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters engaged in suppression activities has generally been found by the Human Rights Tribunal to be a bona fide occupational requirement.

Tribunals have reviewed extensive medical evidence and have generally found that age is a very significant contributor to the risk of cardiac events among firefighters. There is a significant increase of cardiac disease around the age of 60, and the safety consequences of such an event for a firefighter, the public, and his or her colleagues may be grave.

Since its introduction, Bill 181 has received the support of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, who are here today. It acknowledges their concern for increased health and safety risks with age and demonstrates our collective concern for the well-being of Ontario firefighters.

We are all aware that firefighters engaged in active firefighting work under unique conditions. Their work is extremely physical and unpredictable. They contend with hazards such as intense heat, thick smoke and dangerous chemicals. They perform their duties under the most demanding and stressful of conditions. These are the reasons our bill would permit a mandatory retirement age of 60 or over for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.

The retirement may be stipulated, however, in a collective agreement. If there is no such provision, however, in a collective agreement, or the provision that is currently in place provides for a mandatory retirement age younger than 60, the agreement would be deemed to contain the provision of mandatory retirement at 60 years of age.

In order to ensure a smooth transition for all parties, this deemed provision would come into effect two years after royal assent. This two-year period will provide an opportunity to negotiate provisions into a collective agreement that provide for retirement at an age of 60 or greater if the parties choose to do so. It also allows time for planning both by the municipal employer and by individual firefighters, prior to any new provision of their collective agreement coming into effect.

## 0910

I would like to stress that our proposed changes on mandatory retirement generally reflect current practice in most municipalities. There are approximately 11,000 full-time firefighters in Ontario. We understand that only 65 of the 1,254 firefighters who retired between 2005 and 2009 were over the age of 60. We have also learned through our discussions that the average age of retirement for salaried firefighters in Ontario is 57.

In total, there are approximately 80 collective agreements in Ontario that cover firefighters under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. Of these 80 agreements, we know that about two thirds contain a mandatory retirement age. The vast majority of those already stipulate the age as 60. The amendment we are discussing today serves to reinforce what currently exists in the majority of firefighter collective agreements.

Also consistent with current practice is the recognition that salaried firefighters involved in fire suppression duties may continue to make a valuable contribution to their local fire service in other ways. To that end, suppression firefighters would not be compelled to retire if their employer could accommodate them by assigning them to other duties without causing the employer undue hardship. For example, front-line firefighters who have reached the retirement age of 60 might have the opportunity to be assigned to other duties in the fire service, like fire prevention, if such positions exist.

I would also like to take just a moment to speak to the important work done across our province by volunteer firefighters. First, I want to reiterate that this legislation does not impact volunteer firefighters. We are very aware of the crucial role that volunteer firefighters play, especially in smaller municipalities, and the necessary and vital contribution they make to the safety of those towns and villages. Our volunteer firefighters take time away from their families to keep us safe, and we rely on their selflessness and dedication. Our consultations with the fire safety community included meetings with the representatives of volunteer firefighters. The information we received was of great value in developing the scope of this proposed legislation. Importantly, we were told that age restrictions for volunteers would have a significant negative impact on the quality of service in some of the volunteer-serviced communities. In some instances, age restrictions such as those contained in this bill may even shut down delivery of fire services in smaller communities. We know that, roughly, only 11% of volunteer firefighters are over the age of 60, and that these individuals provide invaluable experience to their departments.

We are, of course, aware that some municipalities have composite fire services. These composite fire services are fortunate to have salaried and volunteer firefighters working alongside one another. The firefighters within these composite departments are already differentiated for labour relations purposes under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. A firefighter under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act,



1997, is defined as “a person regularly employed on a salaried basis in a fire department and assigned to fire protection services and includes technicians but does not include a volunteer firefighter.” Overall, retirement is a concept related to employment and being an employee and would not generally apply to a volunteer.

It's with these considerations in mind that the decision was made to bring forward proposed legislation that addresses mandatory retirement for salaried firefighters, as defined in part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, who are regularly assigned to fire suppression activities.

I know that there has been some discussion since the introduction of this bill about its potential impact on pensions. To be clear, we do not anticipate an impact on pension systems as the bill generally reflects current practice and allows parties to agree on setting an age of 60 or higher in their collective agreement. By reflecting general practice and allowing for a negotiated age of over 60 to be set, we are providing local flexibility in those few instances where a firefighter's pension planning is currently based on a retirement age of 65 rather than 60.

The second component of the bill that we are debating today concerns the duty of fair representation. The Ontario Labour Relations Act imposes a duty of fair representation on unions across this province. The duty of fair representation requires unions to represent employees fairly by not acting in a manner that is arbitrary, discriminatory or in bad faith.

This requirement provides most other unionized employees with a statutory right to fair representation. However, because the provision is not replicated in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, firefighters do not have this privilege. Currently, firefighters in Ontario are denied access to the labour relations board for duty of fair representation issues. Because of this, they must go instead to the courts or to the Human Rights Tribunal.

We believe, as do our fire sector partners, that the labour relations board is the appropriate venue for these matters. In fact, in discussing this issue with the parties involved, it became clear that there is no good reason why unionized firefighters should not have access to the labour board in the same way as most other union employees do.

This amendment brings uniformity to the way that firefighters are treated, as compared to most other unionized employees, with respect to the duty of fair representation. Quite simply, giving firefighters access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in matters concerning the duty of fair representation is the right thing to do.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, we are proposing that this amendment on duty of fair representation would not come into effect until December 1, 2011.

In conclusion, Ontario's firefighters keep our families and homes safe. They do so with great bravery and dedication, and deserve our utmost respect. We have listened to the firefighters of this province and to the key stakeholders in the fire sector.

I am pleased to be joined today by members of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the

Mississauga Fire Fighters Association. Welcome to Queen's Park. I am pleased that our government—

*Applause.*

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** By all means, give them a round of applause.

I am pleased that our government has introduced this legislation that recognizes the years of selfless service that firefighters give us. Our bill recognizes the importance of their health and safety as well as the hazardous nature of their work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our firefighters—our firefighters' commitment to the public, to the fire service and to the communities they serve. They continue to serve as an example for all of us. Our firefighters face risks that so many of us never have to. Our firefighters protect us, and so they deserve our protection and our thanks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all of you who do the job every day.

0920

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Go ahead.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker—in this case, Madam Speaker—welcome this morning. It is a privilege to stand in the House today and to demonstrate support for this legislation.

I think we all know that emergency responders are essential to keeping our families and our communities safe. Whenever and wherever Ontario's families are in need, Ontario's firefighters are there. Likewise, when those same firefighters are in need, we as a Legislature should be there.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Ministry of Labour have an excellent history of working together with our fire sector and those fire sector partners to raise the bar for stronger workplace health and safety. We achieved this when the government introduced presumptive legislation to compensate firefighters for their fire-related illnesses. Presumptive legislation ensures that our firefighters and their families are shielded from personal and financial hardship should their ability to contribute to our safety be cut short by job-related disease or occupational hazard. By introducing presumptive legislation when we did, Ontario became a North American leader in addressing disease and illness unique to firefighting.

The story is continuing, and today we are building our support for firefighters. If passed, our proposed amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act would provide for a mandatory retirement age of 60 for full-time firefighters and establish a statutory duty of fair representation that would allow firefighters to take unfair representation complaints against their bargaining agents to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

I will begin by discussing the amendment to set a minimum mandatory retirement age of 60 for full-time firefighters. When the provincial government passed the Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, we did so to end age discrimination in the workplace by removing 65 as the mandatory age of retirement. Ontarians now have the opportunity to choose



when they retire and not have that decision made for them by some arbitrary number pulled out of a hat 50 years ago.

At the same time, we recognize that with age come physical limitations that could be a barrier to fulfilling such a physically demanding job as fire suppression. For that reason, the government did not change the so-called bona fide occupational requirement that allows employers to set a good-faith mandatory retirement age because of the nature of the employment.

In the case of Ontario's full-time firefighters, as defined under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, more than 90% work under a collective agreement, under a fire protection agreement, that contains a mandatory retirement provision. For those municipalities that do not have a mandatory retirement age in the collective agreements, some have addressed the issue of mandatory retirement either through policy or bylaws.

Since the Human Rights Code was amended and mandatory retirement was eliminated in 2006, firefighters have been arguing that mandatory retirement policies should be permitted in their sector. It has come up in meetings that both my colleague the Minister of Labour and I have held with representatives of the firefighting community, and I'm sure with other members of the Legislature. It has been the subject of many letters we have received from members of this House.

Speaker, you will recall that last month, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin brought forward a motion calling on the government to introduce legislation allowing for mandatory retirement of firefighters involved in suppression activities. That motion was passed unanimously, demonstrating across-the-board support for action being taken on this important workplace issue.

If passed, the legislation will allow a mandatory retirement age no lower than 60 for front-line full-time firefighters but still permit the municipalities to set a mandatory retirement age above 60, provided that age is set out in a collective agreement. In cases where a collective agreement does not include a mandatory retirement age, these municipalities will have two years following proclamation to negotiate a new retirement provision before 60 becomes the age for mandatory retirement. Furthermore, firefighters would not be required to retire if the employer can accommodate them without undue hardship.

We believe that the best way to address the matter of mandatory retirement is through collective agreements, as they will codify what is already in practice in most cases. Indeed, our proposed legislation for mandatory retirement already reflects current practices. For example, the average age of retirement for firefighters in Ontario is 57. By the time they reach 60, most will have already been retired for three years. In short, the government is proposing to bring greater clarity on mandatory retirement for Ontario firefighters and drive consistency across the province.

It has also been designed to give the municipalities the transitional flexibility to sit down with firefighters to

negotiate a retirement provision. It will spare municipalities and unions the burden of defending their mandatory retirement policies as a bona fide occupational requirement in the case of a potential human rights challenge. For example, London spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a case before the Human Rights Tribunal. The tribunal ruled that there is a significant increase in health and safety concerns with firefighters over the age of 60. The ruling stated that certain emergency duties were associated with a risk of death that was markedly higher than the risk associated with non-emergency duties. Fire suppression was associated with the highest risk: It was 10 to 100 times higher than for non-emergency duties.

At the same time, we have been asked: Why only firefighters? What about the 18,000 volunteer firefighters who are the backbone of fire halls across the province? The question is: This will affect full-time firefighters; why not part-time firefighters? In our consultation with the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario, and others, indeed, we heard that there is a lack of support among the volunteer firefighter community for mandatory retirement. The mandatory retirement of volunteer firefighters could leave some fire services short-staffed and force others to close. The age of retirement for volunteer firefighters is more appropriately dealt with at the discretion of the municipality.

I would like to turn to the issue of the duty of fair representation for firefighters. As things stand today—the Minister of Labour made some reference to this—in cases where a firefighter believes his or her bargaining agent has acted in bad faith or contravened the duty of fair representation, that firefighter has few options for recourse. Unlike their friends and neighbours in most unionized jobs, firefighters do not have access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for duty of fair representation complaints. By sealing off access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, firefighters have had to take the fight to civilian courts, and in some cases to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. These routes are always more expensive and time-consuming than complaining to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, putting an unfair burden on the firefighter, the bargaining agent and the employer. And those routes do not always have the same legal and technical expertise in labour relations as does a labour relations board. We believe that when the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, came into effect, it was an oversight not to have granted this provision to firefighters. Therefore, we are looking to rectify this in our proposed legislation.

As with mandatory retirement, duty of fair representation is an important workplace concern for Ontario firefighters. It has percolated up from the floor at the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association's annual conventions—and I would like to note that Fred LeBlanc, president of the OPFFA, and Barry Quinn, secretary-treasurer, are with us in the gallery today. I know they've had many deliberations of this kind at their conventions and other venues. So this issue has been on the radar at



meetings with both the Minister of Labour and with me, and again has been the subject of correspondence by members of this House requesting action.

By introducing a duty-of-fair representation amendment to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, we are correcting an imbalance and ensuring that our brave firefighters have the same access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board as most other unionized employees under the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

**0930**

Specifically, the proposed legislation would do as follows: It would establish that a bargaining agent representing firefighters shall not act in a manner that is arbitrary, discriminatory or in bad faith in the representation of employees, and that a firefighter would have access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in cases where he or she believes that a bargaining agent has contravened their duty of fair representation.

Fair and balanced labour relations are an important part of our government's Open Ontario plan to strengthen our economy and create more jobs for our families.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that the government is committed to working closely with our partners in the fire sector to prevent fires, promote community safety and support firefighters in the dangerous job that they do. These are important issues, and we feel it is equally important to respond to our fire stakeholders as soon as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our fire safety partners, such as the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, AMO and the city of Toronto for taking the time to sit down with us and to discuss the issue.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Labour and his ministry, and staff at my ministry, for all the work that has gone into this bill. I think we recognize, as members of the Legislature, particularly when we've had the privilege of serving in government, that much of the work in actually crafting the legislation takes place under the auspices of the ministry officials, those who work on an ongoing basis in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and, of course, in this case, where the lead happens to be, in the Ministry of Labour.

We're asking for the support of the proposal because by working together, we will continue to make Ontario a leader in community and firefighter safety.

I know that all members of the Legislature, at one time or another, have dealt with this particular issue. I think you've had meetings with representatives who have put forward the case for this legislation and have made a compelling case. While I could never speak for any other political party in the House, I have noted publicly that there has been some support for a proposal of this kind.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I thought you were on all sides.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member for Kenora is out of his seat and interjecting from a place out of his seat, but because of his longevity, he's allowed to do so.

I'm pleased to offer those remarks about this legislation. I'm pleased that the Minister of Labour has been able to indeed offer his particular comments on this legislation as well.

I anticipate that, as usual, we will have a debate of substance in this House, and if need be, there will be other opportunities to intervene in this. But I think the kind of representations we have all received on this and the kind of dialogue that we've engaged in have been helpful in terms of bringing the legislation to this particular period in this House.

I would lastly like to commend my colleague the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, who brought forward in private members' hour a resolution dealing with this matter. I was pleased to note that there was, I think, if I'm correct, unanimity in supporting that particular resolution that was before the House. It was yet another example of how, on certain issues—there are always issues where there are significant divisions, and that's part of the political process, but on this particular issue, I think there appeared to be a good deal of consensus.

The details always have to be worked out, the legislation has to be analyzed, and we will certainly endeavour to do that as the debate flows in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to be able to add some comments to the speech from the Minister of Labour and also from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

One of the key things that this bill is doing is it's going to bring in a mandatory retirement age of 60 for professional firefighters involved in fire suppression duties. I must admit, I'm a little bit conflicted about that. I'll be looking forward to hearing from our critic; I believe he's quite supportive of the bill.

I'm just speaking from a personal basis. Having had my wife start a physically active second career at age 45, I'm not sure whether she would necessarily want to be forced to retire at 60. However, I do note that most professional firefighters at this time retire at age—the average age of retirement is 57 years of age, so it's not likely to affect too many people.

I guess I'm thinking about the situation of people who actually do want to keep being involved in an active duty—maybe not very many of them, but there will be some, I would assume. I would wonder, with those people who want to keep active and be actively involved in fire suppression, how this bill will affect them.

I'm also conflicted because, just in the last year or so, we passed legislation doing away with mandatory retirement, so this is kind of flying in the face of that.

I'm sure that, in debate, these issues will be dealt with. I look forward to hearing from our critic, the member from Simcoe North, who I know is extremely supportive of firefighters and the police.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?



**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'll be speaking to this bill in due course. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to do the lead for the New Democratic Party.

Some of my colleagues have already mentioned that the standing orders, of course, require this House not to sit on federal election days. Some have reflected on the fact that maybe it should not be required to sit on the day after federal elections, especially when the polls are closing at 9:30 in Ontario and 10 o'clock our time in BC.

But I do want to say this, and I've been struck since last night: I want to thank and congratulate Bob Rae for finally doing to the federal Liberal Party what he did to the Ontario New Democrats 20 years ago. He has my regard for that remarkable achievement. Somebody who could take out two political parties in the course of two decades truly has talents that haven't been exploited fully yet.

I find it remarkable that the Minister of Community Safety, who, of course, I have the greatest regard for, refers to Ontarians being able to choose when they retire. Please, sir: There are members of this chamber who decline to retire because they don't have full pensions.

There are all sorts of Ontarians who would love to retire. There are workers at the now-demised Atlas Steel in Welland who thought they had a pension and then discovered that they don't. We know what happened in the auto sector. If my colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek were in the chamber today, he'd be reminding the minister of the now US Steel-owned Stelco plant in Hamilton.

I'm looking forward to speaking to the bill. One of the things is that this has got to go to committee, I suspect rather promptly, because we don't want this bill to be killed by a prorogation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened intently while the Minister of Community Safety spoke on this issue. I want to pick up where my colleague from Welland left off.

The reality in Ontario today is that fewer and fewer people can actually retire. In my part of the province, literally thousands upon thousands of workers who thought they had a pension plan discovered that, well, in fact, the pension plan was more than slightly underfunded, so they're not able to retire—and many of them need to retire. They have worked long and hard for many, many years but they are not able to retire. So they watch the want-ad pages, looking from job to job: temporary jobs, part-time jobs—whatever they can put together.

0940

We're always happy to deal with legislation that addresses issues of retirement and pension. We just wish that this government would recognize the full breadth of the issues that need to be addressed here. We're quite happy to deal with this legislation. We think it should go to committee. But we are wont to ask: Where is this government? Why has this government failed to address the issues of the millions of Ontarians who cannot retire now because they don't have the pension that they

thought they were going to have and that they were told they were going to have? Why is this government completely missing in action on that front?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** It's my privilege today to get up to speak to this bill, the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011.

I too would like to add my voice to those who have already spoken, in expressing our gratitude to those who serve us every day in our fire services across the province. I have a few great guys that I know on the force in North Bay, as, coming from a small community, you get to know your firefighters and you get to know your police service. Certainly, they do a great service for us in our community of North Bay, so hats off to the North Bay firefighters today. I know that some of them are watching and I know that they're very interested in this legislation.

This legislation is about recognizing and respecting the unique physical and hazardous work firefighters do to keep our communities safe, and that's what this is all about: keeping our communities safe. It's about recognizing the significant increase in health and safety risks for firefighters over the age of 60 because of the hazardous and physically demanding nature of the job. We are so proud, as part of the McGuinty government, to introduce this legislation that would, if passed, allow mandatory retirement at the age of 60 for the province's full-time firefighters.

My colleagues on the other side have taken the opportunity to talk about other aspects of retirement, mandatory retirement and pension legislation, which are not in fact in debate today. Today we're talking about firefighters; we're talking about fire prevention and protection, and we're talking about our respect for our firefighters across the province.

Most municipalities, as you know, already include a mandatory retirement age for firefighters in their collective agreements. Our proposed legislation would, if passed, provide other municipalities with two years to negotiate a new retirement provision. The changes will only apply to full-time salaried firefighters who respond to emergency calls.

We've spent a lot of time talking with the firefighters across the province. We know that this is what they're looking for, and we're happy to be participating—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The Minister of Labour has two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you also to the members who have contributed to the debate.

Let's be clear what it is we're debating. I know that the members from the NDP went on about pension reform. By the way, it is our government that has enacted and has stimulated the discussion on pension reform in trying to encourage, across the way, their cousins in Ottawa to do the same.

But today we're not talking about pension reform. In fact, this bill is in keeping with the existence of what



already happens in practice. This is about finding ways to protect our brave men and women who are fighting fires on the front line. Medical evidence has indicated that, at a certain age, they're susceptible to harm, and we have to try to safeguard their position as well. What we are offering in this legislation is a deeming provision that indicates that if nothing is indicated, it's deemed to be age 60, but the collective agreement still allows for firefighters and municipalities to negotiate the retirement age. Because of the duty of accommodation, should it be available, it enables them to protect pensions if necessary, but that is in existence. That's the current practice in place now.

I'd like to take an opportunity to reinforce with the members opposite why this is here, why we're discussing this. We're discussing it because the members in the gallery have asked for it. They include Chris Varcoe, Ryan Coburn and Mark Train from the Mississauga professional firefighters. They include Fred LeBlanc and Barry Quinn from the Ontario professional firefighters. I'm also pleased that we have members from Guelph: Colin Hunter and Chris Dixon, who are here with us today. Guys, thank you so much for all you do. We're here for you and we'll do our best to try to protect you as well as you protect us.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I first ask unanimous consent to stand down our lead on this second reading.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you. Just following up from the Minister of Labour's remarks, recognizing Fred LeBlanc and other members who dutifully protect our communities, I want to also recognize some of the leaders in fire prevention, fire protection and fire suppression in my riding. Certainly, the chief in Clarington, Gord Weir, is the fellow I know well. I know him to be a very respected citizen and a truly committed firefighter, professionally. As well, in Scugog, Richard Miller is the chief. For the most part, Scugog is serviced by a primarily volunteer brigade, but does comply with very high standards. In Uxbridge, there's Chief Scott Richardson.

These are the three communities that I represent: Scugog, Uxbridge and Clarington, Clarington being the largest urban area, made up of many smaller municipalities and, of course, many volunteer firefighters as well.

In that respect, I want to recognize Ron Cordingley, who just retired from the Uxbridge brigade. Ron had 40 years of service and served his community well. In fact—I'm just reading a little part here—"Ron Cordingley paused on April 12 to admire the roses, a gift from his wife, Gayle Cordingley, to mark his recent retirement after 40 years of service with the Uxbridge Fire Department. April 12, 2011."

Ron said: "When the pager goes off you never know what you're going to get. You've got to have a lot of trust

in your fellow firefighters because often your life is in their hands."

That's kind of the backdrop. I don't think I've heard anything critical. Everything I've heard, even from our member who responded to the opening day, Mr. Hillier from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—he was very supportive, as I would expect from other members of our caucus as well, in their short, brief time to be able to respond. I know I often hear, in caucus, comments from the member from Simcoe North, Mr. Dunlop, who's also the chair of the committee that I was just on. He would speak very highly of Bill 181, the Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. In fact, I think it was a member from our caucus who initiated the option of dealing with the retirement issue.

If I look at the bill, I actually am quite surprised, and I might say supportive, that the bill, if passed, allows mandatory retirement at age 60 for the province's salaried firefighters. I guess the issue then becomes recognizing the unique, physical, hazardous work that firefighters do to keep communities safe. The proposed change to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act would standardize the retirement age across the province. That standardization, in a climate where people are living longer, being fit longer and having choices, freedom of choice—in fact, this very government was the one that ended mandatory retirement at 65. So you look at the individual choice in the overall scheme of things.

When we look at the issue before us, I think it's important to listen to and work with the association as well, and recognize that the work they do is physical, stressful and rather challenging in most regards. The average age of retired firefighters in Ontario is 57.

The proposed legislation would allow firefighters who believe their local association is not representing them fairly to take their complaints to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. So there is a provision for them to look for exemption.

Most municipalities today have a provision within their collective agreement to include mandatory retirement of firefighters. The proposed legislation would, if passed, give municipalities two years to negotiate new provisions to encourage mandatory retirement.

**0950**

There's also a provision, I suspect at the individual level, to go to the labour relations board or, for that matter, the human rights board. I suspect that would happen. Look at some of the goalies playing in the Stanley Cup semifinals who are now over 40 years of age and doing a fairly good job, I would suggest to some. But I really believe that local councils are also concerned with this.

I put it right back to the front-line personnel in the service, effectively defending our community. They work in a team, as Ron Cordingley stated. Now, if someone on that team is unable to do their share fairly, I think there are questions that remain there. I suspect that's what this is about, ultimately: Is there a provision for physical ability to conduct the duties that you are charged to per-



form? Then you look at the differential tasks within firefighting. There are command posts, where persons certainly wouldn't be jumping up on roofs and jumping into the flames, I would hope—remember that fire last year in Toronto where the firefighter fell into the flames and was rescued, remarkably, off of the wall that was where they were charging the fire? So I think that group safety becomes an important part of it.

Then you look at what jobs people could do. Education and outreach is very important in fire prevention and education. I see it in my community. As I said, I recognize and commend the firefighters' educational function. One of the real issues on municipal measurements of performance function is to cut back on the number of fires, false alarms and all these other things, and their education serves a very important part of it.

But mandatory retirement does become controversial. I suspect that at the end of the day—I would wait for our critic to make that final commitment, but everything I've heard is that we would be supportive of this legislation. I suspect that if there's some need, we will hear from the association—Mr. LeBlanc and others are here—on what needs to be amended.

The bill is quite small. In fact, I have a copy of it here. It's really only one, two, three, four pages. Then it's half French and half English, so it's really two pages long. I can read the explanatory note here:

"The bill amends several amendments of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

"Section 46.1, which imposes a duty of fair representation on bargaining agents for firefighters"—which I mentioned—"and sections 46.2, 46.3, 46.4 and 46.5, which provide mechanisms for enforcing the duty, are added to the act. These provisions come into force on December 1, 2011." That's this year, obviously.

"Section 53.1, which deals with mandatory retirement for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties, is added to the act." That's what I was talking about, the differential duties. Someone who's in fire education, fire inspections or stuff like that, I would suspect would want to stay working. With all the experience they've accumulated and insights, working in the fire marshal's office or something like that, I think, would be a first-class option for some of them. "A collective agreement may include a provision requiring such firefighters to retire"—so it's "such firefighters," those on suppression duties—"at a specified age of 60 or over. Such firefighters shall retire at the age specified in their collective agreement, unless their employers can accommodate them without undue hardship."

That's where it becomes kind of an issue. It depends on what class. If they're a chief, a captain or some other position within the fire force, I would think that they would want to—I mean, I'm over 65 and I have no intention of retiring. Now, I'm not climbing up on roofs, ladders, or doing anything else, but I walk up from the GO train, I walk up from Union Station every morning and I would like to think that I could run a marathon with a week or two of training. I have run them in the past—

I've done triathlons—and I think being active is extremely important.

Once you stop doing things—it's important; at my age, I look at this—you never do them again. That's a pretty serious fact when you look at it, and I've considered it. I say to my wife, "I haven't skydived since I was about 22, and I think I have to do that again." Mr. Miller here regularly flies his airplane, and he would certainly have to get medical tests to do that. Would you want somebody to tell you that you can't fly your plane anymore? Mr. Shurman as well, I would suspect—with all due respect, I should mention their riding names. But they are both very qualified individuals.

It's the same thing. Professional firefighters today train to a very high level, and this section, section 53.1, clearly talks about those who are assigned to fire suppression duties. I don't want to in any way not inform the public. That's the real issue here: that those who are actually in front-line duties would be required to retire at 60.

As I've said before, the bill doesn't do a lot of other things. There's a two-year limit to get this thing fully enforced across the province. Now, if there's a suggestion that somehow—the wording is very important legally: It's the duty to accommodate. If this thing goes to the labour relations board, as suggested in some of my readings—considering that you haven't been fairly represented, the firefighter may appeal to that board. But I would hope the Ontario Labour Relations Board or any kind of mediated solution here would respect the wishes of the force itself. The people who are listening here today, in fact, should work with the profession. This is sort of like the armed forces. My oldest boy, of course, was in the armed forces. Years ago, there was a prohibition against women doing certain tasks within the armed forces. We've moved a long way in that world, and we need to make sure that individual rights are respected and that they have a process to resolve disputes that looks at individual conditions, not legislated conditions, i.e., some sort of magic age of 60.

I would suggest that will be dealt with, but the residual problem then becomes, for small towns like Uxbridge or Scugog, potentially even Clarington—for a time there has been plenty of pressure on municipalities to have full-time professional firefighters on duty all the time, which is the ideal goal. It's all predicated on the health of the local economy, I suppose, to make that happen.

Training is very important in this, and the whole idea of who the volunteers are. Are they appropriately trained? Maybe there's a role here for persons being deployed in a training role to make sure that volunteers have the tools and the skills to do the firefighting that's necessary in the community. I don't want to enter into the debate because, as I said before, there should be processes in place to resolve these disputes, certainly not me yammering on here in the brief time I've been allocated to speak to this bill.

I am interested—today is our caucus day, and I am certain that this will be caucused. I'm convinced. Our whip and I were just saying a few minutes ago that we



are supportive of the bill, from everything I see and everything I feel and everything I've heard from my community. I mentioned the chiefs. I want to hear from members, and I'm telling the members here that I do meet with association representatives whenever I'm asked. I see them out at every event that I'm at in the community, whether it's in parades or volunteering at other local events. They are the shoulders of our community, and I want that to be the final impression I leave here today. I'm proud to stand for them, whether it's the repatriation parades along the 401, through my riding. I'm usually there with the firefighters, standing on the bridge or bridges that I've attended, and they do that with the same sense of duty that they bring to the very profession they're in. It's a call to action.

It's an interesting read when you listen to Ron Cordingley's remarks, quite a lengthy report of his retirement. He was sad to leave. I don't think he really wanted to leave, from everything I read in there. He felt that his team—after 40 years, he certainly was 60, I'm sure, without attributing any age to him. But I'm sure he felt that his team and his function as a volunteer was that he'd still be an admirer of the team, and that's kind of how he left it.

1000

I have heard comments from AMO on the firefighters' mandatory retirement. This is "To the Immediate Attention of the Clerk and Council." It says:

"(i) impose a duty of fair representation on bargaining agents for firefighters and as such sets out that the process for enforcing the duty and enabling complaints is to be addressed through the labour relations board, rather than the court system." I agree with that.

"(ii) authorize collective agreements to set age 60 or over as the mandatory retirement for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties and they shall retire at the age specified in their collective agreement, unless their employers can accommodate them without undue hardship." This is the duty-to-accommodate language. We've got to watch that one. "After two years from the date of royal assent ... collective agreements that do not contain a mandatory retirement provision or that provide for a mandatory retirement age under 60 ... will be deemed to contain a provision requiring retirement at ... 60. The bill's provisions apply despite the Human Rights Code." So there it is. "The legislation does not affect volunteer firefighters," which is clear. But it will certainly set a mandatory trend if the association feels that's the case.

"While the bill proposes that complaints about representation will be addressed through the labour relations board, rather than the court system, there are some unique elements about the process for firefighters. For example, if the labour board determines that the bargaining unit has violated their duty of fair representation, the employer can be ordered to reinstate the firefighter with compensation. It would seem that the municipality holds the liability if the fire association has broken the law." This is a letter I'm reading from AMO to councils. I'm sure the association is aware of it. It's dated April 19.

"The proposed legislation does not define fire suppression, but hinges on the phrase 'regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.' Does this include those who do fire suppression training? Does it include others? The bill, as constructed, means that this too is negotiated locally." I think there need to be standards there, and I again call on the association to bring that to the minister's attention. "It may become a patchwork of different 'definitional' approaches across Ontario.

"Setting aside the limited evidence that there is a health and safety risk due to the unique physical and hazardous work of suppression firefighters, the bill proposes that a municipal employer is to provide accommodation if they do not wish to retire. While the tests of undue hardship contained in the bill are those within the Human Rights Code, it appears that only the municipality has a role in the accommodation process and that the fire association and the individual firefighter do not."

This is downloading, ultimately, the responsibility to accommodate. In a small town—I see the minister is here from northern Ontario—the duty to accommodate becomes an issue—not out of disrespect, but out of trying to put this on the table and have the legislation. I see that the minister is listening; perhaps taking notes. That should be clarified, and this is something that will come up through ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, and Good Roads as well as AMO. I think it's a reasonable request, because many municipalities are struggling.

I know that some local service realignment funding has been done recently in the budget. But I looked at the numbers on OMPF money, the Ontario municipal fund—this is a bit of an aside—and they were uploading some of the services delivered by the province, but there is still a gap. All the OMPF money wasn't continued; it was pulled back to the province to offset some of the uploading that was done.

Municipalities aren't flush with cash. Their only source of revenue is to increase the MPAC tax rate. When I'm talking about municipalities in my riding, most of them—Uxbridge is a perfect example; a classic example. It has been greenbelted; it has no place to grow. It's like Toronto: Toronto can only grow by building up. It has filled up all the space, so now they buy a house, knock it down and build 50 houses on top of each other. Their source of revenue is very much a determinant of what your local taxes are, and that applies to small-town Ontario in a very profound way, because they have a problem with low industrial-commercial tax rates.

These are some considerations of the bill. Again, I just put them on the table. They are serious; they're raised by municipal leaders. They need to be dealt with within the bill or in the context of hearings, and I would suggest that's a good way to resolve it. The intent of the bill is quite idealistic and quite well supported. It is these little anomalies that need to be dealt with, and provisions to resolve issues other than an expensive legal route.

I say on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak: This is a good bill. It protects the public. It protects professional



firefighters. The duty to accommodate is the only little glaring example of how we need some fine-tuning before we make this a perfect solution to a group of individuals who defend and protect our communities. We completely thank them for the work they do on a daily basis in putting themselves at risk to save others. That's a noble cause, and I can tell you that we'd be the first ones in line to be there for you. This bill—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It appears that if I get around—nah, I'm not even going to get around to starting my lead this morning, so we'll have to wait until next time.

New Democrats are going to support the bill on second reading, of course. We've agreed with firefighters over the course of years now, as they've come here on their lobby days and beyond those days, calling for a restoration of a retirement age for firefighters.

I've always been the beneficiary of good counsel from firefighters in my community. A dear friend and leader in the firefighting community, Mike Fowler, has always provided candid and capable advice on these sorts of matters, and for me, his say-so is good enough 99.9% of the time. Fred LeBlanc happens to join Mike Fowler; that simply reinforced the good judgment of Mike Fowler—or his predecessor, Henry Labenski. Andrea Horwath and I were down in Welland with Malcolm Allen, who of course got elected yesterday. We were down at the King Street fire hall, and who was there? Several firefighters, but Henry Labenski—the guy's retired, for Pete's sake, and he's still hanging around the fire hall. Trust me, steelworkers don't go back to the mill after they're retired to hang around the furnace. When they're fortunate enough to be retired, they say, "Enough is enough."

The bill has got to go to committee. I'm worried about this government proroguing before June 2 and this bill then dying. That would be a real setback, because the Liberals are scurrying right now. Make no mistake about it. After last night's federal election results, there are some very nervous people in the strategy rooms—if they have them anymore—of the Ontario Liberal Party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words, and I'm pleased to see that there does seem to be strong support amongst all three parties for supporting this legislation. Ultimately, the legislation is about respecting and recognizing the unique physical and hazardous circumstances of professional firefighters to keep their communities safe. It also recognizes the significant increase in the health and safety risks to firefighters over the age of 60 as a result of the challenging work that they do.

Like almost everyone in the Legislature, I work very closely with the professional firefighters in my community—that's Thunder Bay—and I welcome all the firefighters who are here in the assembly today. Certainly, over the last number of years, the issues that are important to professional firefighters have been made well known to me and others. I've enjoyed the work that

we've done and the fact that our government has been able to be so supportive of a number of pieces of legislation that are so important to them.

In Thunder Bay, I worked closely with Eric Nordlund and Les Newman. I do want to send best wishes out to the past president of the Thunder Bay Professional Fire Fighters Association, Guido Nadin, who has some health challenges these days, but as all those who know Guido know, he is fighting back strongly and vigorously and is a remarkable fellow.

This is important legislation, and again, I am grateful that the Minister of Labour has brought this forth. Again, I think it does truly recognize the very unique circumstances that professional firefighters are dealing with. We often say that we cannot find the right words to thank them for the extraordinary level of dedication that they show towards all of us, but I want to say that it's appreciated by all of us here in the Legislature and across the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I was interested in the comments of my friend from Durham, very particularly on what I'll call his "if you don't use it, you'll lose it" approach to the question of age, what kind of physical demands might be made on you and what you are capable of doing, and this in the context of a bill that pertains to firefighters.

I've had representations from firefighters in the municipalities that I represent in the riding of Thornhill. Those are two: one is Vaughan and one is Markham. These are not communities—I recognize that there are differences recognized in the bill, in fact, between communities that depend on volunteers and communities that depend on full-time, paid firefighters, which both Markham and Vaughan do. As a matter of fact, I ran into one of the representatives from the Vaughan firefighters, who is here to watch some of this debate today, outside the Legislature this morning. They have spoken to me over the past number of years about it, and in general terms I'm supportive.

What's interesting about this bill, and what will garner some public scrutiny and debate, is the issue of the 60-year benchmark for retirement that deviates so much from the norm, where we've come to believe in our society that a mandatory retirement age, regardless of what that age may be, is probably not such a good idea because, if you take a look, there are people who can't lift 10 pounds without huffing and puffing when they're 40 and there are other people who are doing cross-country skiing when they're 90.

That having been said, in the world of firefighting, which deals with public security, you do need a line of demarcation. I would like to think that there would be some aspect of the bill that addressed physical fitness, but if it's to be 60, I think we can agree with 60.

There is the issue of what happens—and it is also addressed in the bill and will need some debate—to somebody who wants to work but can't climb a ladder anymore after 60. That will be aired in due course, I'm sure.



**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions? The member for Durham has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** May I have the other time? The other two minutes?

I'd like to thank the member from Welland as well as the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and my good friend from Thornhill. I really believe that we've discussed this to the point where members understand it. We support it. We think there are a few tweaks that need to be committed to.

But I want to take the time and thank those also who serve our community, and more particularly, federally. I'd like to congratulate Chris Alexander from Ajax-Pickering; Bev Oda from my riding of Durham, who was successful last night, federally; the member from Oshawa, Colin Carrie; as well as the Minister of Finance for Canada, Jim Flaherty. So, Tory blue in Durham.

That being said, those are the municipalities—it's a growth area for the province of Ontario. It's an area that—Whitby, I believe, has all full-time and, I think, professional firefighters. I believe Oshawa has full-time, professional firefighters. I think Clarington has mostly full-time, professional firefighters. And certainly Uxbridge and Scugog have a large contingent. They have some full-time, mostly at the captain and chief level.

The issue that I felt was most salient to the discussion was being clear that volunteers are not impacted by this legislation, but I think it will set a certain tone that is applicable: meaning, perhaps, that there's a time and a place for even members serving the public to look to doing other things in their lives.

But when I looked at Ron Cordingley's remarks, it was clear that he took great pride in it, and it was representative, I think, of all firefighters. He said that he remembered that, one New Year's Eve, he and his wife were at a celebration in the community and his plectron or his pager went off. He was called out on duty to a vehicle accident, and she had to get home alone. So they do serve—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It being almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## WEARING OF BUTTONS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear buttons in recognition of Ontario Provincial Police Association day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would like to recognize the following in our gallery: Jim Christie, interim president

of the OPPA; Karl Walsh, CAO; and the executive and members of the OPPA.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I would like to welcome Lise and Jean-Luc Cinq-Mars, their mother, Charmaine Cinq-Mars, and their friend, Taryn MacDonald.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I'd like to introduce Irina Demitcheva, mother of page Amira, in the visitors' gallery.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'd like to welcome Cay and Jim Shedden from Community Living Toronto, who are here for Appetite for Awareness and will be distributing boxed lunches to all MPPs after question period in room 212A. I invite all the MPPs to join me in thanking Community Living Toronto for all their work and I also invite MPPs to participate in this year's Appetite for Awareness.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I want to introduce the father of page Jonathan Hampton, who is sitting here in his seat representing Kenora—Rainy River.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce some firefighters to our Legislative Assembly today: from the Mississauga Fire Fighters Association, Chris Varcoe, Ryan Coburn and Mark Train; and from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Fred LeBlanc and Barry Quinn.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I would like to introduce a former student of mine and now an OPP officer in my riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry: Greg Smith, sitting up in the gallery.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I would like to introduce, in absentia, a new member of our PC family, Jack Jason Paul Flippance, born April 23 to proud big sister Olivia, mother Natasha and dad Josh.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further introductions?

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a number of guests of mine from the riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London today seated in the Speaker's gallery: Edith Auckland, Karen Auckland, Alex Fife, Micheala Fife, Megan Fife, Margaret Lackey, Ron Lackey, Stephanie Lackey, Diane Macpherson, Don Macpherson, Brenda McArthur, Jamie McArthur, Eric McArthur, Janice Fisher, Randy Fisher, Thomas Fisher, Adam Fisher, Meredith Fisher, Geoff Auckland, Leanne Lackey, and a former teacher of mine, Lloyd Auckland. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, Ontario families are being squeezed financially. Last night's election shows that families were voting for a Prime Minister and a party who will give them relief, will give them a break. But Premier, it's a lesson that you just don't get. You refuse to learn that families are at a



breaking point. At a time when Ontario families feel that they are a bill or two away from making it, you raised hydro bills yet again yesterday morning.

Premier, why do you keep raising costs for families? Why are you jacking up hydro rates when Ontario families clearly are looking for relief?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm grateful for the question. I want to say a couple of things at the outset, if I might.

First of all, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Harper on the re-election of his government and to say on behalf of all of us here, I'm sure, that we look forward to working with Prime Minister Harper.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank each and every Canadian who chose, as an act of faith and commitment, to put their name on a sign and their reputation on the line—not an easy thing to do. I thank them all, of whatever political stripe, for strengthening our democracy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you may have seen the results last night, but you just didn't understand the reason why. Ontario families are getting squeezed. You've increased hydro bills through the roof, your HST tax grab, the eco tax—the list goes on and on. You have raised hydro bills eight times already, and we know you will raise them again—as sure as Premier McGuinty will raise taxes again on hard-working Ontario families. You do this because of the contracts you signed for 20 times the market price of power in your expensive energy experiments. You raised hydro rates to pay for subsidies for families in Quebec and New York while Ontario families get dinged.

Premier, why are you hitting Ontario families when they're coming and going?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important issue. I would encourage my honourable colleague to refer to a document put out by the Ontario Energy Board. It's a sample bill comparison, comparing bills in May 2010 to May 2011. For a typical household where there is no smart meter, the bill last year was \$107.82; the bill this year is \$107.74—it's a reduction. For a household equipped with a smart meter, last year the bill was \$109.01; this year it's \$109.35.

They're essentially flatlined. That is the result of our clean energy benefit, which reduces electricity bills by 10%—a provision, by the way, which the honourable colleague does not support.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, the Premier must live in the only house in Ontario where hydro bills are going down. How out of touch have you become that you say hydro bills are coming down across this province? It is the complete opposite, Premier. Hydro bill rates are up 84% during your time in office; if you have a smart meter tax machine, 150%. Families cannot afford it.

Last night, they voted for relief. They voted for a break. They want a chance to make ends meet, and all you're going to do is jack up their hydro bills and increase their taxes once again. Families want change, Premier. Why don't you get it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I thank my honourable colleague for his intervention in this, but I can't agree with his creative interpretation of what's happened to electricity bills.

I would refer all Ontarians to an independent authority, a third party source: the Ontario Energy Board. I will remind my honourable colleague that in addition to ensuring that we have reliable electricity, they tell us that it's the most reliable system we've had in place for the last 10 years. We're also delivering cleaner air: Coal use in Ontario is down 90%. That's not a matter of concern to my colleagues opposite, but I think reducing the amount of coal our children are breathing is very important to families.

Beyond that, we are building an exciting new clean energy industry in Ontario. So far, we have more than 20,000 new jobs benefiting our families.

That's more than just rebuilding the system; we're cleaning up our air and creating thousands of new jobs.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, I don't know what channel you were watching last night, but families in Ontario clearly voted for relief, and high-taxing, runaway-spending Liberal candidates were shown the door. October 6 is next.

1040

Yesterday, you increased hydro bills once again. In your seven years in office, you've jacked up hydro rates eight consecutive times. You threw the HST tax grab on top of that. You brought in this billion-dollar smart meter tax machine experiment that is driving up the bills, and you're subsidizing power users in New York and Quebec to the tune of \$1 billion to take Ontario power.

Premier, why is it that the only way you can get a break in Ontario is to move to New York or Quebec, where the bills are lower?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I congratulate my colleague opposite on his fanciful interpretation and the creativity that he brings to the facts. But I think that we should focus on the facts, because I think that's what families want us to focus on.

I'd ask my honourable colleague: Why is it that, for example, when we moved ahead with the clean energy benefit to reduce the impact of our electricity changes on families, they voted against that? Why is it that when we put in place a new tax provision that's reducing income taxes on our families by \$355 this year and every year going forward, my honourable colleague voted against that? Why is it that when it came to particularly needy families and we put in place the Ontario child benefit, benefiting some 1.2 million children, \$1,200 a year, my honourable colleague voted against that? Each and every



time we put in provisions to benefit families, they vote against them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Clearly, the Premier must have turned his TV off last night to save on his skyrocketing hydro bill. You just don't get it, Premier. Families need relief. They need life to be more affordable. Premier, the first rule when you're in a hole is, you stop digging, but you're digging families—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Energy will withdraw the comment he just made.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The first rule, Premier: When you're in a hole, you stop digging. But Premier McGuinty is doing the exact opposite. Premier, you keep digging deeper and deeper. You're raising hydro bills. You slapped down the HST. You're blowing \$7 billion on a sweetheart Samsung deal. Waste, bloat and salaries at the OPA are through the roof, and contracts for power are at 80 cents a kilowatt hour when the price of power is four cents in the marketplace.

Premier, how out of touch have you become that you don't get the lesson that Ontario families need relief? Life needs to be more affordable for average Ontario families.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I certainly hear my honourable colleague, but I can't agree with his own particular interpretation of the federal election results yesterday.

I think Ontarians have an interest in some of the things and they offer some support for some of the things that we've done on their behalf, and I'll just list a few of those things. The fact is that now Ontario is first in Canada and second in North America in attracting new job-creating investments. Our schools are now among the best in the world. We are first in North America in college and university attendance. We are first in Canada when it comes to having the shortest wait times. We are first in the world to replace polluting coal-burning electricity with cleaner electricity.

We admit that there is more to do. We are not going to do what my honourable colleague would advocate, which is to turn sharply to the right and depart from the distinct path of progress that we're on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, the Premier continues to demonstrate just how out of touch he is with what is happening in Ontario homes and at kitchen tables. There's no doubt that's why the Premier has increased hydro bills eight times in his seven years in office.

We would take a different path. An Ontario PC government would give Ontario families the relief they need, the relief they deserve. We will bring change to the province of Ontario. We will pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines and give every family a choice in our province. And we will sign contracts—no

more 80-cent power, Premier—that are affordable to the actual families who have to pay the bills.

Premier, why don't you get it? An Ontario PC government will give the relief that Ontario families deserve.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As they say, everybody is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts. The facts are the facts. Again, I'd refer my honourable colleague to the Ontario Energy Board information about what has in fact happened to electricity bills.

Here are a few other facts. When my honourable colleague was in government, there was no investment in new generation or new transmission, and that led to an unreliable system with electricity shortages and blackouts. From 1996 to 2003, generation capacity in the province of Ontario fell by 6%. At the same time, demand grew by 8.5%. Dirty, coal-fired generation increased 127% from 1995 to 2003, and we were importing electricity like crazy.

We have turned all of that around. We have a reliable system, we have clean air and we're creating thousands of new jobs. That's exactly what our families want us to do.

## HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario families desperately need a break, especially from sky-high utility bills, bills that are eating up more and more and more of their household budget. I hear of their struggles everywhere I go in Ontario.

Why is this Premier stubbornly refusing to give families the break they so desperately need?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I welcome the question from my honourable colleague. A couple of things that I want to say: First of all, I would ask my honourable colleague to stand and support the change that was recently made, so that if you are enjoying the benefit of time-of-use rates in the province of Ontario, the discount period no longer begins at 9 o'clock in the evening; it now begins at 7 o'clock in the evening. That's 10 more discount hours every week. That's in combination with the full discount period throughout the entire weekend. The discount period is now from 7 in the evening to 7 in the morning.

I would also remind my honourable colleague that when we move ahead with our clean energy benefit, which reduces the bill by 10%, my colleague had been asking that we reduce it by 8%. We took it two points higher than that. Again, I would ask of her that she lend her support to an important provision which is helping Ontario families right now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The fact is that the Premier just doesn't seem to get it. He remains out of touch, and he ignores the realities that are being faced by struggling Ontario families on a daily basis. When can those families expect the Premier to finally understand exactly what it is that they're struggling through?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We feel that we have a heavy responsibility to ensure that when Ontarians, whether in their homes, in their schools, in their hospi-



tals, in their factories, in their office towers or in their barns—when they flick that switch, we'd darned well better make sure that the electricity is there and that the lights are coming on.

The first thing that we're doing is, we are rebuilding 80% of our electricity system over the course of the next 20 years. It turns out that those wooden hydro poles don't last forever; every once in a while, you've got to rebuild those things. That's exactly what we're doing. It turns out that our nuclear plants don't last forever, and to keep them safe, we've got to invest billions of dollars to ensure that we retrofit those in an appropriate and responsible way. Those are the kinds of things that we are doing.

There is a cost associated with this. My friend says that she can do all of this and there will be no costs associated with that whatsoever. That's magic. We don't have magic here; we just have a sense of responsibility. We're doing the right thing for Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontario families are sick and tired of a government that just doesn't seem to listen to them. They're sick and tired of a government that continues to make the wrong choices, a government that has made life more and more expensive.

What will it finally take for this government and this Premier to realize that Ontario families need help?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I guess maybe it's in terms of how we interpret the kinds of help that families want.

I think the first thing they want us to do is to make sure we have enough electricity not only to power our homes but also to power the growth in our economy. The fact of the matter is, we are coming out of this recession much stronger than many other parts of the world.

Secondly, they want to ensure that we can find a way to invest in electricity that both cleans up our air and leaves a foundation for an exciting new industry. That's what we are doing. I thought I would have my honourable colleague's support when it came to shutting down coal-fired generation in Ontario. It's not an easy thing to do, but we think it's a very important thing to do for our families, especially our children and our seniors.

I thought as well that we would have her support when it came to building an exciting new clean energy industry with wind turbines, solar panels and the like. I thought that we would have her support in this regard, but we don't. Again, she has an opportunity to reconsider; we would love to have that support.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is again to the Premier, and it's about helping Ontario families make ends meet. They've seen good, well-paying jobs simply disappear, and they're seeing the costs of just about everything go up.

The Premier can continue to bury his head in the sand, or he can finally do something to ease the burden faced by families. Which is it going to be?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would remind my honourable colleague of some good news that is out there. She may not enjoy it, but it's there nonetheless.

1050

For example, we've learned that in 2010—that's before, by the way, we put the HST in place—economists predicted the economy would grow by only 1.2% to 1.4% for 2010. We just got the number. The actual economic growth for Ontario's GDP for 2010 is 3.3%.

We now know as well that, for the latest quarter, GDP has grown 3.8%, which is higher than the Canadian average. We've recovered, so far, 93% of the jobs that we lost during the recession, which is significantly more than the US, which is 15%; the UK, 44%; or Germany, 35%.

Always more work to do, and we look forward to keeping doing it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** New Democrats have been very clear: We're on the side of Ontario families. We'd take the unfair HST off of hydro permanently and off of heating. That's precisely the kind of break that Ontario families need and deserve. Why won't the Premier support that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We've had the opportunity to speak to this before, and it's something that continues to puzzle me. My honourable colleague stood in her place on several occasions and repeatedly asked that we reduce the cost of electricity by 8%. We have reduced it by 10%. I'm hoping that at some point in time, my honourable colleague will acknowledge that we've in fact trumped her, but more importantly, we've done what is right for the people of Ontario. We're reducing their bills by 10% over the course of five years as a clean energy benefit, and the net consequence of that has been that we have effectively flatlined electricity bills, according to the Ontario Energy Board.

Again, I would ask my honourable colleague to acknowledge that at some point in time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This Premier's temporary rebate scheme doesn't fool anybody, and that's the fact. He likes to pretend that everything is still okay, but outside of his bubble things are far from okay. Ontario families are looking for solutions, solutions that are going to help them make life more affordable.

New Democrats are offering those very solutions, and that is exactly what we want to see more of, but the Premier and his government unfortunately refuse to support the kinds of solutions we're bringing forward. Why won't the Premier just take a moment to listen to Ontario families instead of pretending that everything remains A-okay in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, with respect to energy, we just introduced a new measure which will increase the discount period by two hours every day. That's 10 more hours a week, in addition to the full discount period available on weekends.

My honourable colleague says that she's concerned about some of the economic burdens borne by families,



especially as they struggle to emerge from a very difficult recession, and I understand that. So again, I've got to ask myself: Why does she not support our Ontario child benefit, which is benefiting 1.3 million Ontario children? Why didn't she support the 215 new drugs that we've added to the public drug plan? Why doesn't she support our reduction in income tax for the average Ontario family by \$355? Again, why does she not support our measure to reduce electricity bills by 10%?

Each and every time we extend an opportunity to my honourable colleague to support a measure that benefits families, she turns us down, and she effectively turns down Ontario families when she does that.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. The lesson from last night's election and the municipal elections last fall is that Ontario families are voting for a Prime Minister and mayors who will give them relief. It's a lesson that appears to be lost on Premier McGuinty. He's gotten so out of touch that last week, he defended his policy of selling power to New York and Quebec at a financial loss. He told the media that we've netted \$300 million from power sales to New York and Quebec, but the C.D. Howe Institute says that's not right. Your power exports have cost \$1 billion since 2006. What made you think you could get away with making Ontario families pay 80 cents for power that you sell for two cents and then you claim that you made money on the sale?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Sometimes telling a very small part of a very large story can be very challenging for people to understand when it's put like that.

The facts are that now that our energy system is actually in a positive surplus situation, energy consumers here in this province have benefited to the tune of \$1.5 billion since 2006. We can compare that to their approach, where energy consumers lost through their nose just about a billion dollars in their last two years in office alone because they couldn't produce enough power to meet the demand and they had to rely on expensive imports just to provide power to Ontario families and businesses.

I look forward to the supplementary because I want—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Ontario families know that only a change to a PC government will give them the relief they need on hydro bills. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch, he thinks that hydro bills have flatlined. He is so out of touch, he keeps signing contracts that pay 80 cents for power that costs four cents in the marketplace. He's so out of touch with Ontario families, he thinks they can afford to pay billions for expensive energy experiments even when they don't need it and won't use it. He says that they prefer to pay the hydro bills of New York and Quebec residents.

How soon before you hit Ontario families with the next hydro increase which you will spend on more ex-

pensive energy experiments in the mess that you've created?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's go back to the days when a member of this House, a member of the opposition, was sitting as Minister of Energy. The member for Simcoe-Grey said this in those days: "If we can make money on surplus power in the United States, we're damn well going to do that." Well, they couldn't do that because they weren't producing enough power to be able to export power, because they weren't producing enough power to meet our needs.

He went on and said, "This summer when we didn't have enough electricity"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** We used to make money, Brad.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe-Grey.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of the Environment, member from Ancaster.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Community Safety, member from Nepean, government House leader, member from Leeds, member from Thornhill, member from Nepean for the second time.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's go back to what they were saying back then, because I think it's very telling. The member for Simcoe-Grey said in this very Legislature, "This summer when we didn't have enough electricity in this province because we hit peak high temperatures and all the air conditioners were running, we had to buy power.... I had to pay \$7 million one day to keep the air conditioners on in our hospitals. That was highway robbery."

That was your system. Our system has surplus power; our system is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

### LABOUR UNIONS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Premier: Why does the Premier persist in denying farm workers the right to join a union and bargain collectively?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I believe the member opposite is addressing the Supreme Court of Canada decision, which, after careful deliberations to the matter, has reaffirmed that the agricultural act we have in place allows for our farmers to be represented. The Supreme Court of Canada says the Agricultural Employees Protection Act provides "farm workers in Ontario ... meaningful processes by which they can pursue workplace goals."

This decision protects farm workers with the constitutional right to free association. The right guarantees that the farm workers can form free associations to collective-



ly represent and communicate their interests to their employers. Employers, by the way, are also obliged to address the farm workers.

Our government, the Supreme Court—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The ball is in the government's court. It's now up to the government to ensure that agricultural workers in this province have the same rights as any other worker. Why does this Liberal government persist in denying agricultural workers the same rights that other workers have in the province of Ontario?

1100

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Our government and the Supreme Court of Canada are satisfied that the act that now exists provides the industry with the best means to resolve issues. But let me say, more importantly, we appreciate the work of our family farms and recognize that the short planting season and harvest season would in this case be controversial. We appreciate the harmonious relationship we have with our work farmers and between employers and employees.

*Laughter.*

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'm surprised they're laughing, because when that party was in power and the other party was in power, we had the worst of our work relationships in this province. We now have harmonious relationships. We value our relationships with our employees. We will continue to support them. We don't have the worst options. We are proud of our record, and, more importantly, our act supports—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

## POLICE SERVICES

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I have a question for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The Ontario Provincial Police is an exceptional police force. The women and men of the Ontario Provincial Police serve their communities with distinction. Every day, they face difficult and dangerous situations in order to keep Ontario families safe.

Just recently, OPP Constable Dell Mercey received international recognition for his work with the Ontario Provincial Police when he was named trooper of the year by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. OPP Constable Mercey was the first Canadian to ever earn this distinction.

Can the minister explain what the Ontario government is doing to support the Ontario Provincial Police and their remarkable officers, such as Constable Mercey, in their work to protect Ontarians?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** That's an excellent question, I must say as well. We've invested in Ontario's police services and developed a strong working relationship with Commissioner Lewis as well as the Ontario Provincial Police Association, Jim Christie and Karl Walsh.

We've invested to ensure that our police partners have the resources they need to keep our streets safe. Here's

what we've done: put 2,300 additional police officers on the street across the province; increased the budget of the Ontario Provincial Police by more than 50%; and stood as the only Canadian province to dedicate every penny from the federal police officer recruitment fund to front-line policing, including 125 new front-line OPP officers. We've also invested over \$90 million to construct approximately 30 new OPP detachments, communications centres and forensic identification centres—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Not surprisingly, the ability to live and raise a family in a safe community is a top priority for my constituents. In the wake of the global economic recession, Ontarians are slowly but surely getting back on their feet and putting their finances in order. Similarly, municipalities in the province are working to balance their budgets. My constituents are concerned that the province's and municipalities' focus on eliminating their deficits will reduce their commitment to public safety.

Can the minister explain what the Ontario government is doing to ensure the continued safety of my constituents?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I can assure the member, first of all, that deficit reduction will not be at the expense of public safety in this province. We have made significant investments in Ontario police services since 2003 to ensure our police partners have the resources they need to keep our streets safe.

As a result of our investments in policing, the Ontario Provincial Police is one of North America's largest police services, with more than 6,100 uniformed officers, 2,700 civilian employees and 850 auxiliary officers. The OPP work is to ensure that communities across the province are safe. Currently, more than 300 Ontario municipalities have chosen to have the OPP deliver their local police services.

Your constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin are benefiting directly from our investment. As of February 26, the request from the municipality of Wawa, for instance, has been complied with, and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, as of yesterday, nearly 1,000 people in my riding were still without power as a result of damage from last Thursday's windstorm. They spent the weekend in the dark, not only because their lights went out but because they couldn't get important information from Hydro One about what was being done to resolve the problem. When they did get through to a real person, they were given updates that later proved to be inaccurate. Municipal officials had the same experience, hampering their ability to help residents.

Minister, we all applaud the Hydro One crews working around the clock to fix the damage, but now I want to



know what you're going to do to fix the obvious communications breakdown.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's always regrettable when circumstances happen, in particular bad weather, bad winds and things like that, that sometimes will impact the flow of electricity. That's something that, indeed, at times is beyond our control. We count on Hydro One and all of our energy partners to get the power back on as soon as possible.

Critical to getting that power back on is investing in a modern infrastructure system, something that that party has fought us on every step of the way.

One thing I can tell you: As we bring in the modernization of our energy system and smart meters, our local distribution companies can get right to those power outages as quickly as possible. It's a great advantage to energy consumers, something we support by making those important investments, something that they've rejected every step of the way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Minister, forget your spin that everything worked as planned. The people who needed information couldn't get it. That's what you need to know. This is just one more proof that this government doesn't have its priorities right. Instead of investing in maintenance to prevent these power outages in the first place, you wasted billions on your smart meter tax machines and your other failed energy experiments.

Minister, this is Emergency Preparedness Week but clearly your ministry isn't prepared. Will you commit to review maintenance and communications programs to prevent a repeat the next time a storm rolls through Leeds-Grenville?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Maybe the member should think about this the next time he votes against the investments we're making in building stronger infrastructure in this province, in modernizing our infrastructure, in moving towards a smart grid, in bringing forward 4.5 million smart meters, all of which are critical in our efforts to get power back on when things like bad storms occur.

That's the difference between our time in office and yours. In your time, power was going out because you weren't producing enough of it to provide to Ontario families. We have enough power in the system now. We have a reliable system. When storms happen, we do our utmost to get the power back on.

We'll always look to improve that service. We'll continue to work with Hydro One to provide better and better service. But it's a heck of a lot better today than it was in those dark days of blackouts and brownouts when they were in power.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier: The Ontario government plans to build a new nuclear power plant at Darlington. It has a responsibility to ensure that Ontarians are fully aware of the risks and dangers of nuclear power. Why, then, is the Ontario government allowing Ontario Power Generation to withhold

information about health and environmental dangers of accidental radiation releases at the Darlington and Pickering nuclear plants?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm mildly surprised that the NDP would be raising this issue. Our nuclear safety experts have clearly stated that releasing this information that Greenpeace has indeed requested would pose a threat to the safety of our nuclear facilities. I really find it surprising that the member wouldn't be aware of that. I think, frankly, it's a bit ironic that Greenpeace and the NDP would be requesting information under the guise of public safety when the information they want would actually put our citizens at risk.

The NDP and Greenpeace: We know they don't support nuclear power. However, one would expect that the NDP and Greenpeace would understand the importance of putting the safety of nuclear facilities ahead of politics. Apparently not.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Interesting response, Minister. As you probably knew before you stood up to answer that question, in March a senior adjudicator from Ontario's Information and Privacy Office urged OPG to release information on potential radiation releases should an accident occur at the Pickering or Darlington nuclear plant. I actually don't have any control over them. You should be aware of that. The adjudicator said that "events now unfolding in Japan ... underline the vital necessity for informed public debate about nuclear safety issues"—not our party, not any environmental group; the Ontario information and privacy office.

When will the Ontario government, as sole shareholder of OPG, order OPG to stop hiding information about the risks of nuclear plant radiation?

1110

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** All issues surrounding radiation are on the websites of federal agencies, 24 hours a day, that residents of Ontario can refer to at all times. That information is available.

But I believe what the member is asking for is a request for information that Greenpeace has made to Ontario Power Generation. They've been advised that that information would present a public safety issue with regard to ensuring that our citizens are protected. In light of what's gone on around the world on the weekend alone, one would think that the member would understand that these public security issues are important to respect.

I'm going to ask the member again: Give some thought to where your priorities lie. Do they lie with public safety or do they lie with trying to play politics with a very important issue?

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. College students and university students are finishing up their exams right



now, and they're embarking on the next chapter in their lives: finding a career. Ontario's economy has recovered 93% of its jobs. It continues to turn the corner. The province as a whole is in a good position to offer students and graduates summer and long-term employment as they start their lifelong work careers.

Minister, what is our government offering the newest members of Ontario's workforce so they can start their career journeys confidently and successfully?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to answer this question, because it is important for us to be able to turn to our young people and say, "You have a future here in Ontario and we want to help you, even while you're in school and finishing your education."

We heard, in the last budget, about \$22.5 million being set aside for summer employment programs; three that my ministry is managing. One is called Summer Company, a terrific program that allows grants up to \$3,000 for young people to actually start a business. And I have to say that those companies that end up staying as companies, where the student goes back again the next summer and picks it up again, are really tremendous. The success rate there is terrific.

Another great program: the global entrepreneurship program. We actually organize young people to go and have mentorship programs in other countries and bring that experience back to Ontario.

We want everyone to go to [ontario.ca](http://ontario.ca) and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Young graduates in your riding and in my riding of Willowdale—indeed, right across Ontario—have a great future as they complete their studies. It's all based on the strong economic infrastructure here in Ontario. In particular, the Ontario summer jobs strategy will help graduates prepare for their future careers in a whole lot of different sectors here in Ontario.

But what about today? What about tomorrow? What do these graduates who are completing their studies, as we speak in this chamber—what are they going to do tomorrow? What are they going to do today? Where are the jobs coming from once they are no longer eligible for the summer jobs strategy programs?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I know so many people were heartened to see that Ontario ranked tied with California a couple of weeks ago in garnering the most foreign direct investment of any other jurisdiction in North America. They scored jurisdictions by how many jobs come into those jurisdictions with that foreign direct investment.

But here on the home front, just as a budget initiative alone, pouring millions of dollars into our own economy, our businesses are creating jobs in partnership with the Ontario community and the Ontario government. Let me give you a couple of examples: Silfab, a solar-based company creating jobs here in the greater Toronto area; Digital Extremes, in the information, communication and technology hub, creating jobs right here in London,

Ontario. Great examples in different sectors, but huge opportunities for young people to stay in Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## DISCRIMINATION

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship. Mayor Rob Ford showed strong leadership recently when he took a principled stand against discrimination. He took a clear stand against city resources being used to fund the activities of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid in any way. In contrast to the strong leadership and clear stand of Mayor Ford, the McGuinty government turned its back on the Jewish community. Your government handed out \$400,000 of Ontario taxpayers' money—no strings attached, no conditions, no assurance that the money would not be used to fund the hateful and hurtful activities of this group.

How do you justify Premier McGuinty's shameful and weak leadership on a matter of such importance to the Jewish community?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I thank the member opposite for asking this question, but I have to respectfully disagree with his characterization.

I'm aware that Queers Against Israeli Apartheid has decided quite certainly not to march in this year's Pride Toronto parade. Instead, they will be moving in a different direction. I think this is a positive development for Toronto, for Pride and for the Ontario community.

We recognize the efforts of Pride Toronto to also actively fight discrimination and create a comprehensive process which will avoid any type of conflict, and I want to reiterate that Ontario is absolutely committed to fighting all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Not marching doesn't mean they're not represented. This House was clear in its view on the use of the word "apartheid" being applied to Israel. The resolution I brought 15 months ago, condemning the insulting and hateful use of "apartheid," was debated and it was unanimously adopted. But in the face of a clear statement and the will of this House, the McGuinty government did its own thing. You increased funding for activities that include Queers Against Israeli Apartheid by \$100,000, and that's the same amount the city of Toronto may withhold if this group is supported in any way.

How dare you go around the principled stand taken by this House and Mayor Ford by handing out money with no assurances that my resolution and the Jewish community will be respected?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, I respectfully and emphatically disagree with the characterization provided by the member opposite. Queers Against Israeli Apartheid has stated clearly that they have decided not to march in this year's Pride Toronto parade. Ontario is absolutely committed to fighting all forms of discrimination.

I agree with the member opposite on this respect: that last year this Legislature unanimously condemned the



term “Israeli apartheid.” This term is disgusting and divisive, and does nothing to encourage constructive dialogue.

I should add that we expect all individuals and organizations in Ontario to fight all forms of discrimination and hate, including, in particular, anti-Semitism. The McGuinty government stands with Ontario’s Jewish community and all diverse communities in fighting all forms of discrimination and hate.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Niagara region families are reeling from the latest news of what this government is planning for local health care. The Niagara Health System is looking to slash anywhere from 75 to 120 long-term-care beds. Will the Premier tell us exactly how many long-term-care beds his government plans to cut in Welland?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me just say to my honourable colleague that I think she has a good understanding of where we’ve been coming from on the matter of health care for the last seven-plus years, now.

She will know that we have increased operating dollars by close to 50%. I think she’s aware that we’ve hired some 11,000 more nurses and some 2,900 more doctors. We started from zero; we now have 200 family health teams treating some three million patients. We’re going to have 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics, the first of their kind in North America, I think treating some 30,000 or 40,000 patients. Some—what is it?—94% of Ontarians now have a family doctor; that’s 1.2 million more than before. We’ve done a lot by any objective assessment. There’s always more to be done. Again, I could add that we now have the shortest wait times in the country; we didn’t even measure them before.

So, again, there’s real, objective, measurable progress, but there’s always more to be done. I certainly acknowledge that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, one of the things the Premier needs to do is fulfill his own promises about things he plans to do in places like Welland. Right before the last provincial election, the McGuinty Liberals announced the construction of a new long-term-care home in Welland. It hasn’t materialized. They promised the community would see about 100 new beds, but now, not only did that not materialize, but there are plans to cut long-term-care beds despite the fact that at least 500 seniors are on long-term-care home waiting lists.

For months, local municipalities have called for an independent investigation of the Niagara Health System. Why has this Premier ignored these pleas from the community, and why has he now decided to put much-needed long-term-care beds on the chopping block?

1120

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to restate something that has been said several times before by myself and my honourable colleague the Minister of Health, and that is,

we’re not cutting health care. We keep finding ways to invest more dollars in health care, and we keep finding more ways to do it in as efficient and as effective a way as possible.

One of the things that we want to take up with the new federal government is a new 10-year health accord. I’d ask my honourable colleague to join us in that regard. We think we can complete that new deal by the end of 2012 rather than by the end of 2014, as originally was planned. We’re convinced that we can get it done in a way that secures medicare for the future.

The issue, to my mind, is not where we’re going to cut; it’s what are we going to do smarter and better than ever before as we invest new dollars to ensure that we get the best possible results for the people of Ontario?

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, there’s been a great deal of interest in green energy and, in particular, microFIT programs in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Many farmers in the riding have installed solar systems and are participating in our government’s green energy plan. It has been a tremendous success, and I’m told by my rural caucus colleagues that this enthusiastic participation is happening across rural Ontario.

Could the minister provide this House with a status update on the number of microFIT projects providing clean energy into the grid, as well as on any economic benefits that have been created as a result of this program?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I’m happy to do that, and I want to thank the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes for his question.

Our microFIT program has indeed been a tremendous success, and I’m pleased to hear that so many of his constituents are taking an active role in helping to grow Ontario’s clean energy economy and build a clean and healthier future for our kids at the same time.

I can tell the member right now that over 5,000 small renewable energy projects are feeding clean energy into the Ontario grid. An additional 5,000 projects have been green-lighted for connection as soon as their installations are ready. These projects are earning local farmers up to \$10,000 a year. Not only are these projects creating additional income for farmers, they’re helping to create thousands of jobs across the province as part of our clean energy economy.

We’re going to continue to stand up for clean energy, we’re going to continue to stand up for Ontario farmers, we’re going to continue to stand up for a healthier future for our kids and we’re going to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Minister, I’m encouraged by the level of interest and the success of the microFIT program. I know it’s creating good-paying jobs in my riding.

Minister, I know that some members in this House do not believe in this important government policy and they



do not support the clean energy economy that it is creating. My constituents fear that the lack of support for the microFIT program will lead to instability in our new clean energy economy and will kill countless jobs in my riding and in the province.

Can the minister please tell me, my constituents and microFIT participants in rural Ontario: What are the impacts of ending such an important provincial policy?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Indeed, this is a critically important program for our economy, and ending the microFIT program would have a devastating effect on Ontario's clean energy economy. Thousands of Ontario jobs would be lost and it would send a hugely embarrassing message to the world that now that Ontario has become top in the world and we're a global-leading clean energy economy, we no longer want to take leadership in this area. It would be devastating to your community and communities across the province.

But candidates from the PC Party continue to say that they want to rip up these contracts. I want to quote one: "We will shut down all of the planned expansion of that unaffordable, unworkable microFIT plan. There will be no new contracts." That's the candidate from the member's riding, Laurie Scott, who said that. The Conservative Party continues to show disrespect for Ontario farmers and for Ontario families, and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** On behalf of Tim Hudak and our caucus, we'd like to welcome the OPPA here today to the Legislature.

My question is to the Attorney General. The Minister of Community Safety said that the reason that he and Premier McGuinty are refusing to apologize for passing the secret G20 law is because there are a number of ongoing court cases out there at the present time.

The minister sits right in front of you. Why don't you just lean forward and tell him about the Apology Act you passed in 2009 so that apologies aren't taken as an admission of liability in legal proceedings?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It may well be that my colleague wishes to comment on the supplementary. We would like to thank former Chief Justice McMurtry for his advice and his recommendations with respect to the PWPA. My colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services will be speaking to this matter more in the future. He has already indicated the government's intention.

My friend opposite knows full well that it's just one of the characteristics of Attorneys General that whenever there's an ongoing court case, we don't comment. We just sort of treat it as something that we don't comment on. That's to protect all parties to the court case, to ensure the fairness of proceedings. We just don't do it because what the AG says can be used in different—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** You don't comment and you don't answer questions. It's a sign of just how out of touch and out of gas the Premier and his McGuinty Liberals have become.

You insulted Ontario families by passing the G20 law in secret. The OPP opposed your secret G20 law as well, but you did it anyways. You insult them further when you try to blame others for the law you and a bunch of your other McGuinty Liberals decided to pass. Then you outdo yourself by refusing to be held accountable using phony excuses: that it would affect legal cases when it won't. You won't take accountability, so every man and woman in uniform gets blamed.

How many more ways will you insult Ontario families just because you refuse to admit the colossal mistakes you've made as a government?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I thank my friend very much for the supplementary that had been written before he actually heard the answer.

But we do want to thank again former Chief Justice McMurtry for his very important advice and recommendations. My colleague the Minister of Community Safety is committed to this.

It's just one of those characteristics of Attorneys General that we always, regardless of how tempting it might be to intervene, to make comments, to respond to the temptations—and there are many—stand back and accept the slings and arrows. We say, "You know, we're going to protect the process. We're going to protect rights to fair trial. We're just not going to engage in the back and forth, and we won't comment on ongoing proceedings."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. My constituent Monsieur Michel Chevrier has been referred by his physician and accepted at a bariatric centre of excellence in southern Ontario, since we don't have one in northeastern Ontario yet. Since last fall, he has had to travel to Guelph for numerous appointments, but the northern travel grant program has refused to cover his costs. Why is it that people in northern Ontario do not get equitable access to health care services?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** What I can say is that we've built 15 new hospitals. I think there are three more on the go. I think four of those new hospitals are in northern Ontario. We're very proud of that. That was an area of the province which went underserved by any objective definition, so we've made those investments.

I know that they have new nurses in northern Ontario. We have a new medical school in northern Ontario which is designed to ensure that we draw more young people from the north into medicine so that they can return to the north and practise there. We've made some real steps forward. There's always more that we can do.

I know that we have made some changes to the northern health travel grant to ensure that it is broader in terms of its scope and provides more relief to Ontario families. I look forward to hearing more in the supplementary.



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, we don't have a bariatric regional assessment and treatment centre in Sudbury yet. We are talking very few people, for a limited period of time, just until such time as Sudbury Regional Hospital is ready to go. It is on the way; it's just not there yet. But for those people, those few people, it is a huge financial strain.

I would hope that you would do the right thing and cover the travel expenses for northern Ontarians, the few of them who qualify, travelling to southern Ontario to get health care services that are not available in northern Ontario.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to say a couple of things on this. First of all, we have improved the northern health travel grant. I know that. My colleague—I get the sense she's raising something here which might serve as interim support until something is finally in place. What I'm prepared to do is to undertake to review this, in keeping with the request put forward by my colleague, and to see if this is something that is sensible for us to do. We don't want to leave people in the lurch as we're trying to complete progress on a program that would meet their needs there, so I will give this very careful consideration.

1130

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, I realize that the protection of threatened and endangered species in our province is an important endeavour, but I am concerned that the Endangered Species Act places too many restrictions on businesses. I'm worried that these restrictions may discourage businesses from engaging in projects that will create jobs in our province. In Guelph, the possibility of the presence of an endangered species actually delayed development of a new industrial park for over a year, and of course, in the end it turned out that the particular salamander wasn't present at all.

Minister, what are you doing to help businesses deal with these restrictions?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to thank my colleague from Guelph for asking the question. The job of my ministry is to balance the economic development of our natural resources with environmental protection. Our government's Endangered Species Act includes strong provisions to protect the recovery of the species and their habitats.

We have to find the right balance to strike in order to protect endangered species in a way that still leaves Ontario open for business. That's why my ministry recently announced that we will streamline the permitting process for developers and landowners who want to work in areas where endangered species live. The proposed initiatives include a five-month service guarantee for a permit, which would begin once a proponent has finalized a

complete application package with the ministry, and accelerating permit timelines with earlier permit posting while providing better access to information online.

We believe these proposed initiatives respond to the needs of our stakeholders, they're good for business and they strike a balance between species protection—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to thank the minister for explaining the streamlining of the permit process, but I'm also concerned that even with these permits, many businesses are unsure exactly how to operate under the Endangered Species Act without committing any violations. For example, I've heard from a property owner who has chimney swifts, which I actually didn't realize were covered under the act. He has chimney swifts in an abandoned industrial chimney, and of course it's an abandoned chimney, so it's deteriorating. But it seems that the birds actually still love this particular chimney and can be seen up there circling around the old industrial chimney.

Minister, what is your ministry doing to provide clarity to businesses that are operating in the habitats of threatened or endangered species?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to thank my colleague for this timely question on policy clarity for the Endangered Species Act.

Last week my ministry posted a draft policy proposal on categorizing and protecting habitat under the Endangered Species Act on the Environmental Registry. This policy will provide greater clarity and provide certainty for industry while ensuring the consistent application of the high standards of species protection guaranteed by the Endangered Species Act. This policy will ensure consistency in the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act across all provincial districts. It will also help inform businesses of exactly how they are expected to operate within the Endangered Species Act, particularly when they are operating in the habitat of an endangered or threatened species.

By placing the policy on the Environmental Registry, we hope to get feedback and input from all major stakeholders. I'm confident that these measures will help attract more business to our province as we continue to turn the corner—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. There are 1,500 people on a wait-list for an organ in this province, and one person dies every three days waiting for an organ transplant. While many jurisdictions across North America have a registration rate of some 85%, Ontario lags at a registration rate of 17%. For some four years now, we've been calling on the government to implement an online organ donor registry. We still don't have one. Can the Premier tell us when we will see an online organ donor registry in this province?



**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague raises a very legitimate issue. It was brought home to me recently when I tweeted about the fact that it was national organ donation week, and some people tweeted back and said, "If I could register online, I would have done it right away." The fact of the matter—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If I might, Speaker—I think that's a real issue. I hope to have some good news for my honourable colleague, who I know would support this initiative, in the not-too-distant future.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to take this opportunity to welcome some constables from my own riding: Jeff Grey from Middlesex county; James Morrow from Elgin county; and also Janet Balch, a civilian from the Ontario Police College.

Also, on behalf of the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, we welcome Constables John Riendeau, Denise Green and Pearl Lariviere from the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP. Welcome to the Legislature.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 151.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On April 21, Mr. Phillips moved government notice of motion number 57. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dickson, Joe  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine

### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Gélinas, France  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hudak, Tim

Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Munro, Julia

O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 27.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm expecting in the chamber here today Doug Lewis, who is from the Ontario Provincial Police Association. He's a director in that capacity, and he's also a constituent living in Kendal. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FEDERAL ELECTION

**Mr. John Yakubski:** I rise today to congratulate the Right Honourable Stephen Harper on his re-election as Prime Minister of Canada and achieving a majority in the House of Commons.

It was very clear yesterday that the message that Canadians accepted was one that Prime Minister Harper was delivering, one that our leader, Tim Hudak, continues to deliver here in the province of Ontario.

We must remember that the Liberal Party of Canada was reduced to third party status for the first time in Canada's history because they weren't listening. It is a message to the Liberal government in the province of Ontario. Last night should show the Liberals that families want relief and want government to focus on their priorities. That's what they voted for last night in electing Stephen Harper to a majority government.

Dalton McGuinty has good reason to be concerned. His brand of tax-and-spend nanny-state government was firmly rejected by the people of Canada and the people of Ontario, where the Conservatives elected over 70 members in the province. A message to the Liberals: It's time to change tactics. You are not resonating with Ontario. You're old and tired and out of gas, and on October 6 we hope they'll make the same change here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?



## FEDERAL ELECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a slightly less partisan note, I rise today to just thank the hundreds—in fact, the thousands—of volunteers who worked so hard for all of the candidates in the federal election. I know that our constituents often don't know this, if they're not one themselves, but it takes an army of folk to elect anyone. They are volunteers, tireless ones, who, just because of passion and conviction, actually get out in the rain—many of us were very soggy last week—knock on doors, pull the vote, stay up late, make sure the counting goes correctly, inside and outside scrutineers; in fact, a vast array of volunteers goes to every one of the positions that we enjoy here and every one of those who were elected last night.

For all the parties and all their volunteers, we just want to say thank you; it's very rarely said, and usually only for a minute on election night. Whether you won or whether you lost, you did not do it alone; you did it with the help of legions of Canadians. This is truly democracy in action, to see the level of wonderful volunteering that's happened. So to all of our volunteers, a huge and a well-said and well-felt thank you.

## POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Two days ago, on May 1, 2011, in an historic event in the presence of millions watching, Pope John Paul II was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican in Rome.

He was born as Karol Józef—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Yes, go ahead. You can applaud.

He was born as Karol Józef Wojtyła on May 18, 1920, in Wadowice, Poland. Ordained as a Catholic priest on November 1, 1946, he began his papacy on October 16, 1978, lasting more than 26 years until his death on April 2, at age 84, in 2005.

He would acquire the title of “the pilgrim Pope,” visiting 129 countries, including Canada three times—1982, 1987 and World Youth Day in 2002.

Yes, indeed, Pope John Paul II was a pilgrim of God. He became the first Pope to enter a mosque and the first to ever enter a synagogue in over 2,000 years. He championed human rights and promoted and encouraged open communication, improving relations with Judaism, Islam, the Eastern Orthodox church and the Anglican Communion.

Pope Benedict XVI said that we remember him as a great witness of God and Jesus and a man filled by the Holy Spirit in our own times.

## LANDLORDS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I stand to inform the House of a very serious issue. I'm referring to the current Landlord and Tenant Board filing fee. Currently, tenants are required to pay a \$45 filing fee, while landlords are

required to pay a \$170 filing fee. This is almost four times as much for the same fee. This is bias. This bias particularly affects small business landlords. It is time that this government reduced the filing fee so that both tenants and landlords have the same fee.

A couple of weeks ago, I read into the record a petition—all of whom supported an adjustment that would see the filing fees set at an equal amount.

I have continuously cautioned this government about the increasing risk they are creating in our rental housing stock. The end result may be that small business landlords are getting out of the business altogether. We simply cannot afford to lose any more of Ontario's valuable rental housing stock.

The current dispute system is broken. Some 142,000 Ontarians are on the social housing waiting list. Landlords are challenged to keep up with rising costs like HST, high filing fees, hearing delays and several other barriers. I encourage this government to level the playing field, make the necessary changes, fix the dispute process and create a balanced process both for tenant and landlord.

## GERRY ROSENQUIST

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I rise in the House today to congratulate a medical professional in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry who has been honoured for his service in the community. Dr. Gerry Rosenquist was recently recognized for his 50-year career, not only at Winchester District Memorial Hospital but in the local region.

Dr. Rosenquist graduated from the University of Alberta in 1960. Upon receiving a letter from his uncle Reverend Blackwell, Dr. Rosenquist travelled to eastern Ontario to see what the prospects were in the area. He found there was a need for doctors, so he established a home and practice in Williamsburg township, now the township of South Dundas. Not only did he establish his practice, but he and Dr. Don Robertson, who practised in Morrisburg, got together to establish the St. Lawrence Medical Clinic.

Other milestones in Dr. Rosenquist's career include becoming a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 1974, being Winchester District Memorial Hospital's chief of obstetrics from 1975 to 2003 and chief of staff from 2003 to 2006, and being a lecturer for the faculty of medicine at the University of Ottawa in 2007. Another honour for Dr. Rosenquist was the announcement of a new scholarship in his name. The Winchester District Memorial Hospital created the scholarship as a reflection of their recognition, respect and affection for Dr. Rosenquist. And this afternoon, I would like to say hello to my mother, who is a patient at that hospital.

I am honoured to have Dr. Rosenquist in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and I thank him for his 50 years of service in the medical profession.



### HUCK FINN YOUTH FISHING DAY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Each year in the community of Uxbridge, in my riding of Durham, we welcome the start of spring with the Huck Finn youth fishing derby. This past Saturday, I once again threw my line into the Elgin Pond to try and catch some of the elusive trout, along with the children and their families. This was the eighth annual event. Hundreds of families and children came out to enjoy the beautiful sunshine and just generally share fun with the community.

The day was sponsored by Canadian Tire in Uxbridge, featuring a parade, free lunch, rod and reels to borrow, free bait, and prizes for all participants. I want to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources for stocking the Elgin Pond, and I want to thank the organizers—Pat Higgins, who is often called Huck Finn and is the manager and owner of the Canadian Tire, regional councillor Jack Ballinger, and Amanda Ferraro from Uxbridge township—for making the day a success for the kids and their families. I also want to thank Dan Pollard, a well-recognized MC, for being the spokesperson for the day, along with Mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor, as well as Gord Highet, Jacob Mantle and other councillors who had joined us that day.

1510

At the end of the day, the winning fish was measured at just over 17 inches, but the real winner were all the children and their families.

This is an excellent event that gets kids and families outdoors, and teaches the values of conservation and environmental awareness to the next generation. Congratulations on a wonderful event and I look forward to it next year.

### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It was a great privilege for me to attend and speak at an event on April 23, 2011, to commemorate the anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Members of all levels of government from all three political parties were present at the Armenian Youth Center in North York.

The genocide is known to have started on April 24, 1915, the day that some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders were arrested in Constantinople. From then on, Armenians were uprooted from their homes and forced to march for hundreds of miles, while being deprived of food and water, to the desert in what is now Syria.

The year 2011 marks 96 years since the terrible atrocities that occurred between 1915 and 1923, when more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were massacred. The Armenian genocide set the stage for other genocides and human tragedies. Although many countries around the world refuse to acknowledge the horrific events that took place, we here in Ontario choose to recognize this tragedy and take the time to mourn the lives that were lost.

The Armenian community has made many significant and enriching contributions in Canada and in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. I offer my sincerest condolences to the families of all those lost. By honouring these victims, we also remember to cherish our freedom and the sanctity of human life.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Today I wish to recognize the good work that was done by our government and my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The announcement in this year's budget of a permanent risk management program is good news for Ontario's farmers and farm families, especially those in my riding of Brant. However, the real credit for this program goes to the farm groups that put the proposal together. This was farmer-driven; programs by farmers for farmers.

I had the great pleasure of welcoming Minister Mitchell to the riding of Brant a couple of weeks ago when she visited a Bite of Brant in Burford. There, she met with local farmers and leaders of the Brant County Federation of Agriculture. Farmers like Larry Davis, a dairy producer and Brant's director of the OFA, said that the RMP is a good initiative for the newest generation to enter the business of farming: "It gives them a bit of stability that they can see into the future."

We think it speaks not only to our commitment to the family farm, but also to the understanding that the family farm serves as the cornerstone of a healthy and vital rural Ontario. We're pleased that we have done that.

Today, we commit to the farmer and we have a commitment from the provincial government, but there's one partner that we have to invite to be at the table: We need the federal government to come to the table. Agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility. Farmers are in, the province is in and now it's the federal government's time to get her done.

### PATRICK CHAN

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is my pleasure today to rise in the House and congratulate one of Ontario's finest athletes, Patrick Chan.

This past week at the World Figure Skating Championships, Chan exhibited the perfect balance between grace and athleticism, setting three new world records in the process. The 20-year-old Ottawa native's short program, which included two extremely difficult quad jumps, scored 93.02 points and gave him an 11-point lead over the next-closest skater.

Chan didn't let up. He set another record in his free skate of 186.96, and his total combined score of 280.98 was another record. The record-breaking performance allowed the four-time Canadian champion to rise to the number one ranking in the world.

Hard work and determination, values that Chan shares with all Ontarians, were the key to his success.

After an Olympic performance that saw him finish fifth, Chan renewed his focus and added two quadruple



jumps, the most difficult jump in the sport, to his routine. This allowed him to rise above the competition and achieve his long-held goal of being the best in the world.

All Ontarians are proud of Patrick and his accomplishments.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA COLLECTION McMICHAEL D'ART CANADIEN

Mr. Chan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to make my statement during ministerial statements.

### IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms / Projet de loi 189, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** The bill amends the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

Currently, the act prohibits the sale of an imitation firearm unless the purchaser is at least 18 years old and presents specified identification. The amendments impose additional conditions on the sale of imitation firearms. These conditions include that the purchaser must provide a description of his or her intention regarding the use of the imitation firearm and that the purchaser must not have been convicted of a criminal offence.

The amendments impose a requirement on a person who sells an imitation firearm to keep a record of the sale

for five years, and the amendments increase the maximum fine to which a person who contravenes the prohibition regarding the sale of the imitation firearm may be liable.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Before I begin, I would like to welcome Lynn Bevan, close family friend to the McMichaels; the chair of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Upkar Arora; board trustees Jamie Cameron and Wenda Yenson; and CEO Victoria Dickenson. They join us here at Queen's Park to observe today's important introduction.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I am pleased to introduce amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act. Our government knows how important the McMichael is to Ontario. It celebrates our heritage, it promotes our culture and it helps drive our economy. We, as a government, want to ensure the McMichael's future success.

The McMichael's current legislation confines the agency's mandate, limiting its collection to artists who are specifically named in the legislation or approved by an art advisory committee. Unlike other public art institutions, the McMichael's ability to renew its exhibitions is quite restricted.

1520

The amendments we are proposing today, if passed, would help revitalize the McMichael, giving it the flexibility it needs to renew its collection and exhibitions. These changes, if passed, would:

- provide the gallery with the flexibility to develop diverse, innovative exhibitions;

- make it easier for the McMichael to build its collection;

- ensure the collection continues to focus on the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada;

- enhance the McMichael's appeal to a broader audience.

These changes, if passed, are in line with our government's Open Ontario plan, a plan to support economic growth and jobs in Ontario.

The proposed amendments, if passed, would increase cultural tourism and economic activities in our great province. The McMichael is world-renowned for its extraordinary collection, attracting almost 90,000 visitors a year to the Kleinburg area. Yes, these are visitors who come to enjoy art, but they also come to shop, dine and explore all that Kleinburg and Ontario have to offer. This means more business for local shops, restaurants, hotels and attractions.



Across the province, spending by overnight cultural visitors generates over \$3.8 billion for the economy, supporting over 64,000 jobs. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection contributes to that success. But for it to continue to grow, compete and remain sustainable, the McMichael needs our support. This is why, last year, our government—together with the federal government—invested over \$4 million to help the McMichael complete renovations and upgrade its grounds. It is also why we are introducing amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act today.

We are pleased to have the support of the Fenwick family and the McMichael board for the proposed changes. Our government is a proud partner of the gallery, working in concert with the board to advance and enhance this important and invaluable cultural institution and to ensure that the legacy of Robert and Signe McMichael is protected so that future generations may continue to enjoy these generous gifts. The amendments are about helping the McMichael continue to grow and to influence and inspire visitors as one of Ontario's most beloved cultural treasures.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I rise in the House today to talk about our ongoing efforts to deliver faster, easier and better government-to-business services. It's our Open for Business initiative, and it's saving businesses both time and money, helping them focus on what they do best: growing our economy and creating jobs for Ontario families. As Minister of Economic Development and Trade, I've held many round tables and consultations with business leaders, from the very largest of corporations to the very smallest of mom-and-pop shops across Ontario—entrepreneurs and small business owners from right across Ontario.

One area where the business community has consistently asked for improvement is in service standards, and based on their direction and input we've improved the consistency, quality and accessibility of more than 500 business service standards across 17 ministries. These enhanced services came into effect April 1, 2011—this past month—and they're now available in one easy-to-access place. Businesses can simply go to [Ontario.ca/businessstandards](http://Ontario.ca/businessstandards) and search by ministry, keyword or category.

Here's something pretty exciting: We posted them April 1, and since that time we've had 1,000 hits to the website. I've got to tell you, most of the time it doesn't get that kind of action, but we know that people are very interested in how we're changing government to accommodate businesses. So we're pretty excited about that.

It may seem like a small change, but let me give you an example of how this is making a big difference for business. When a company applies for, say, a permit to take water, their completed application will be confirmed as received and assigned a unique reference number within five business days, and the Ministry of the

Environment will provide a decision on the complete application within 90 calendar days.

Businesses will also now receive government information in plain language, providing more clarity and certainty when they apply for approvals, funding permits and licences. We've also improved our business service standards for customer service and information requests.

Now businesses will know exactly what to expect when dealing with a government of Ontario office or applying for a government program or service. Next spring, we're going to publicly report on the results of meeting our service standards.

We have to tell people what the service standards are so that everybody knows that we're in fact meeting them. It sounds a lot like our Ministry of Health waiting lists. No one in the past had decided to even match what you're doing to know if you're meeting any standards, and that's what we've done here in our government. Already, we're hearing great things.

Ian Howcroft, vice-president of the Ontarian division of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters has this to say of our improved business service standards: "The Ontario Open for Business service standards initiative is making a real difference for Ontario businesses. By posting the business service standards in plain language and in a centralized location, our members can easily identify the timelines for hearing from the government on applications for a host of government services. This makes it easier for our members to plan projects, saving them time and money." Thank you, Ian. We agree.

Our efforts are making things easier for businesses in Ontario. We know there's more work to be done, and that's why we keep working to improve business service standards and the way we deliver the services to businesses.

Over the next year, we're going to continue to engage the business community and work to expand the initiative to include all ministries, not just those 17; improve service efficiency to provide even faster service in all areas, with a focus on those areas that matter most to business; streamline the review processes to speed up the approval timelines for a business when they're applying for permits or licences from more than one ministry.

And just as importantly, we're going to continue to listen to business about what they need from us. In June, staff from across the OPS will hear first-hand from business stakeholders about what they expect from government services, helping to further drive improvements in how we deliver our services to businesses.

Through our Open for Business initiative, we have delivered results that have saved businesses time and money. You know who's saying that? Businesses. Businesses are telling us that we're seeing the results we're looking for.

We're going to carry on this work as we continue to improve government-to-business services, help our economy turn the corner and make Ontario truly open for business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Statements by ministries? Responses?



## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Just because a hapless minister or a dying government say something is open for business doesn't necessarily make it so. If this government were serious about standards, why did the Liberal government abolish the PC government's Red Tape Commission? Why did it take seven years in office for this government to develop service standards in the first place?

The Progressive Conservatives established the Red Tape Commission in 1995, 16 years ago. Under our government, we oversaw the passage of 15 red tape reduction and government efficiency acts. These acts helped repeal over 80 outdated statutes and amend well over 200 other acts. In addition, the commission worked with ministries and their agencies to remove over 2,000 outdated and unnecessary regulations—and we're hearing about what is going on now. In contrast, Open for Business is the Liberals' weak attempt to reduce red tape. To be talking about service standards now is too little, too late. It's hypocritical, but don't worry; we'll fix it next session.

The minister likes to talk about all the jobs they have created. She is forgetting—

*Interjections.*

**Interjection:** Stop the clock.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, I'm not stopping the clock. The honourable member made a comment that was unparliamentary, and I would ask him to withdraw it, please.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Withdrawn, Speaker.

The minister likes to talk about all the jobs they have created; she is forgetting a few important details when she does. You can't just talk recovery and ignore what you have done to create the mess that we're in.

1530

What did the Liberals do before the recession? The answer is, nothing. In fact, they hurt Ontario so that we became a have-not province. This government has not created private sector jobs; in fact, they led the decimation of the Ontario forestry and manufacturing sectors, and there is no recovery to date.

The fact is, Ontario is still not recovering at a rate that is comparable to the rest of the country, and this government's irresponsible spending, scandals and economic policies are hindering economic growth even further. I don't even apply the term "open for business" to what this government is doing. The McGuinty government has not done nearly enough to create the conditions for a speedy and true economic recovery; Dalton McGuinty has done just the opposite.

# McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** First, I want to offer a few words about the process. I want to express my appreciation to the government House leader, who today hand-delivered a copy of this bill to our House leader. This morning, I

received it for the first time at 11:15. Expecting to receive only the text of the minister's statement, I was pleased to see the actual text of the bill. Still, it would have been more helpful to have had it last week so that I would have had the chance to consult with stakeholders before preparing my response today.

I look forward to what they'll say about this bill, including its provision removing the requirement for an art advisory committee to be established. I wonder why the government would think that an advisory committee isn't a good idea, but we'll find out. We'll approach this bill carefully, with an open mind, as we always do.

Returning to process, I want to suggest to the House that on a bill like this, here's the way it should work: If the government introduces a bill, the opposition critics should be informed that same day, as I was today, and on that same day, the critics should also be offered a briefing, which didn't happen. I would say that this would be a constructive idea perhaps for the future.

I'm privileged to serve as the opposition critic to the ministers of culture and aboriginal affairs. The McMichael exhibit showcases both. When I became the critic, I knew that one of the first places I wanted to visit was the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, and in September 2009, I did just that. It's still one of my favourite art galleries—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** No. I'd been there before, probably 20 years before, when I was still in university, and I think when I was in high school. But certainly I've had the opportunity to visit on a number of occasions. In fact, I was here when A.J. Casson received his Order of Ontario in 1991 and was pleased to be present on that day. Obviously it was well deserved.

The last time I spoke to this House about the McMichael, I said that it showcases much more than art; it showcases the very best in our province and our country.

The McMichael exhibition highlights some 40 living Canadian artists using the traditions, forms, styles and materials of west coast First Nations art. But more than that, its collection is known worldwide as the spiritual home of the Group of Seven, and it's open to the public for all to appreciate.

The collection is the inspiration of the founders, the late Bob and Signe McMichael, whom I was also honoured to know. I admired their commitment to ensure that the collection would be enjoyed not by a select few but by all Canadians and indeed the world. Their generosity has fostered culture and creativity in our province. For that, the cultural history of Canada is enhanced.

I want to welcome the representatives of the McMichael who are here today. We look forward to the opportunity to debate this bill.

# McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to say very briefly that I've had an opportunity to visit the McMichael collection



myself. It's an impressive place, an impressive collection, one of the premier art institutions in this country. I've taken a quick look at the history over the last decade or so of the McMichael and understand the difficulties that have been faced by those involved with the collection. I look forward to reviewing the bill, talking to stakeholders and determining the position of our caucus on this legislation.

I would say to the minister, though, that it was a bit unfortunate that he linked this bill to the Open Ontario slogan of his party. I didn't see any need for that sort of partisanship.

That being said, I look forward to the discussion on this bill.

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Responding to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: I'm the critic for small business, and I can certainly say that the McGuinty government is no friend to small business in this province. It may be a friend to the mall, but it's not a friend to Main Street. From pharmacists to butchers, family business has been under attack by the McGuinty Liberals ever since they were elected. In fact, the HST alone got the back up of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. They were here to lobby, and not one minister came to meet with them—that was outrageous—to meet with an organization that represents some 30,000 mainly small business owners in and around the GTA. To ignore them is uncalled for, and not only is it uncalled for, but the fact is, they don't even have a minister in charge of small business anymore. They have eradicated the small business portfolio from their area of concern.

In Ontario, we are dealing with a situation where the major engine for new job creation, small business, is under attack. Small business is responsible for about 90% of all new jobs, and yet we know they're suffering. We know the HST is hurting them. We know legislation—and as my colleague from the Progressive Conservatives said, red tape is hurting them. We know we've lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs and replaced them with jobs just slightly over the minimum wage. This is not recovery.

This is a government that can't manage its own books. This is a government that has not only got the highest deficit of all the provinces in Canada—in fact, more than all the other provinces combined—but it has actually doubled our real debt. Since Confederation, we've had about \$130 billion in real debt. This government, in eight years, has doubled that figure. This is a government that can't manage its own books and has the pretense to talk about helping somebody else manage theirs. That's the reality.

The very arrogance of saying that a website is somehow going to save somebody who is drowning in red ink in a small business is exactly what the McGuinty government and Liberals are famous for. Where real action is needed, instead we get a website. Where real action is

needed, instead we get a minister standing up and pontificating. Where real lives are being affected, we get photo ops.

I don't think Ontarians are buying it anymore; in fact, we got a very good indication yesterday that they're not. Small business knows what's really happening. They know who's really on their side, and they know who's really not on their side. That's what we saw yesterday, and that's what we'll continue to see until this government takes some action.

I didn't even mention, by the way, the so-called—the stupid meters—smart meters that are a direct assault on small business because most of them are open during the day at peak hours and they have to pay peak prices for a system that doesn't save energy and that's simply a tax grab. It's a move from big business to small business. That's what this government has done consistently: favour big business over small business. We're tired of it, Ontario is tired of it, and we're not going to stand for it anymore.

### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in memory of Holocaust Memorial Day, following which a moment of silence will be observed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I rise today to mark a solemn occasion of remembrance, Yom ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Memorial Day. I was honoured to attend the Yom ha-Shoah Holocaust commemoration at Earl Bales Park here in Toronto this past Sunday. I have to say that it was a deeply moving and very meaningful commemoration.

This is a time when we remember the six million European Jews and all the victims who perished at the hands of the Nazis and reaffirm the message of "Never again." Countless words have been written on the impact of the Holocaust, but perhaps no words capture the scale of the loss better than ones that date back about 1,500 years. The Talmud, the Jewish book of rabbinic commentary, teaches that whoever destroys a soul is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. Think of each victim of the Holocaust, each man, woman and child. Imagine entire families made extinct or branches broken forever—six million worlds destroyed.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a time when we pay tribute to all those who fought, all who suffered, all who died. It's also a time when we remember all who survived, many of whom made their way to Ontario to build a new life.

Every year on Yom ha-Shoah, the air raid sirens sound in Israel and all the country comes to a stop. People stand, wherever they are, in silent devotion and reflection.

In Ontario, and the world over, we stand together with the Jewish community to reverently mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Our government recognizes the opportunity and necessity to teach Ontarians about the enduring lessons of the Holocaust. We recognize that we must



never take the rights we enjoy and the way we live together in harmony for granted, for we know from history, and from modern events too, how easily hatred can lead to terror and horror. We must ensure that our young people in particular, for whom World War II and the Holocaust are distant events, understand what transpired and understand that racism, inequality and intolerance can yield evil. That is one of the ways we pay tribute to those six million who were lost and to survivors: by being vigilant against discrimination and by not tolerating it in any form, anywhere.

1540

On this Yom ha-Shoah let us pledge to always remember that and to never forget the victims or the lessons of the Holocaust.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm privileged to rise this afternoon on behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, to recognize Holocaust Memorial Day, or Yom ha-Shoah.

Across Ontario and Canada, people are participating in solemn ceremonies to honour and remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, that most horrific of chapters in our human history that's rife with evil. We will shed many tears as we pause in silence to remember the terrors inflicted on those men, women and children in their final days. For many, including some of my colleagues here at Queen's Park, those tears flow for family members, lost because of the hatred that fuelled Hitler's final solution. For those, such as myself, without a personal connection to the Holocaust, our tears flow for the senseless loss of so many innocent lives.

On this day, against the flickering backdrop of candles lit in remembrance, we all set aside our religious, cultural and political differences to come together as one society to mourn the millions of lives snuffed out too soon. Generations were exterminated, and entire communities vanished at the hands of the butchers who operated those concentration camps with frightening efficiency. The sickening toll included 1.5 million Jewish children. Even today, their innocent faces haunt us, staring back into our eyes from family photographs that are often the only memories of their all-too-brief lives. Our hearts break and our minds struggle to comprehend how a society could turn on its most vulnerable with such ruthlessness.

As a father, it is those children I think of today. Their voices long ago fell silent during the murderous rampage that Hitler unleashed in Nazi Germany and eastern Europe between 1933 and 1945. When we look at their faces in those photographs, they shout out to us, compelling us to do more than simply remember them; they shout those two powerful words that say so much: "Never again." Those words demand that, as we stand silently today in mourning, we also vow never again to let our silence allow the evil that they fell victim to to be unleashed in our world.

We know that Canada, and Ontario in particular, became a refuge for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in the years after the war. Today, the descendants of those Jewish immigrants flourish in our free society, and we are much richer for their contributions in our province.

But we also know that Canada could have done more to be a safe haven as the Nazis were setting their murderous plans in action. As those Jewish families pleaded for our help, we chose to close our doors. We carry that guilt with us still, which is one reason I believe this nation has been so quick to respond to pleas of help from the victims of brutality in the decades after the Holocaust. Canadians know that the surest way to prevent the rise of hatred is to create a democratic society where freedom, justice and tolerance can flourish. It flourishes here because of moments like this afternoon, where we all in this House stand in solidarity to condemn hatred. At the same time, our very presence in this democratic institution sends a powerful statement that the darkness of evil that gave rise to the Holocaust could not eclipse humanity's enduring desire to hold tight the bright light of freedom.

But we must remain vigilant, because the shadow of anti-Semitism haunts us still today, not only around the world but in our own country and our own province. The best weapon against the ignorance that lies at the heart of all racism is education. That's why I'm so proud that in 1998, this House passed a private member's bill introduced by my colleague the member from Halton to proclaim that Ontario would recognize Holocaust Memorial Day. We were the first jurisdiction outside of Israel to do so.

This province is committed to ensuring that future generations know the meaning of those two words calling out to us since the concentration camp gates were torn open: "Never again."

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my honour to rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to make some comments on Yom ha-Shoah, on this Holocaust Remembrance Day.

One of my favourite political philosophers, Elie Wiesel, commented about what was called the banality of evil. Sometimes it's just a little too easy for us to blame a handful of psychopaths or sociopaths for what happened in a place like Nazi Germany, when we all know very well that it was an entire populace that was also implicated. There were clerks who signed the death warrants. There were townspeople who turned a blind eye. There were soldiers who carried out their duty non-thinking, without looking to what was truly ethical or moral.

There is a wonderful film, and I certainly advise every parliamentarian to watch it, called *Conspiracy*, which is a re-creation of the meeting where the Nazi leaders discussed the possibility of a so-called final solution. There were jurists there, there were clergy there, there were engineers there, there were politicians there, there were military there. They all had their own agendas; they were sometimes competing agendas. There were all sorts of politics played around that table. But one question was never asked, and that was about the ethicality or the morality of what they were actually doing, which was that they were about to execute six million men, women and children. It was like, in other words, any other bureaucratic meeting where the morality or the ethicality



that should have been central to the discussion was notoriously absent.

Really, what all of us need to do on this day is to say and to mean, "Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa; my sin, my sin, my most grievous sin."

I can tell you, as a Christian minister, that the Christian church was also implicated in those deaths; that only about 3% of active Christians in Germany came out—it was called the Confessing Church—in opposition to what Hitler did. Many of them were executed, many of them also ended up, like the famous Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in concentration camps—hung, killed, for standing up. Only 3% of Christians stood up against the horror.

The question for us living now is, what would we do? What shall we do? What would we do? How would we search our own souls? How would we know, if put to the test, what we would do for our brother and our sister? Would we put our own lives on the line?

The lessons of Yom ha-Shoah, the lessons of Holocaust Remembrance Day, really are still to be learned in our world, are still ours to learn in this world. Certainly, it's a time for soul-searching, not finger pointing. It's a time to think about our own relatives from whatever background and what they did or didn't do, what we could do or can't do, what we will do or won't do to combat the kind of anti-Semitism, the kind of racism, the kind of prejudice, bigotry, and the banality of evil itself, that passive going along with inequality, the passive watching as oppression happens, the passive listening as the joke is told that we know is offensive yet we say nothing—to look at all of these actions, to look at them in light of something so terrible that, really, it defies imagination or description. Six million dead—children, Jews. Roma were killed too; socialists were killed too; activists were killed too; people of faith were killed too, faiths other than Judaism. It was a world that died in the concentration camps across Europe, and it certainly was a world born, in terms of the way we look at how human beings interact.

1550

So, my friends, we too recognize; we too pause; we too pray; we too hope that the words "never again" actually mean, for us, for our children and for our grandchildren, truly never again.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all members and our guests to join me as we observe a moment of silence in recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## PETITIONS

### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I have a petition of 716 signatures of concerned citizens of Russell and the surrounding area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents in the constituency of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell in the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the following:

"Whereas the petitioners have serious grievances with the proposed development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services, proponents of the Capital Region Resource Recovery Centre (CRRRC) planned for the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties between Eadie Road and North Russell Road, between routes 100 and 200 in the township of Russell;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to take action to cause an absolute cease and desist order for this proposed CRRRC development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services on this site of the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties in the township of Russell in the province of Ontario."

I do fully understand the concern of those people.

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have more petitions in support of Bill 100, paved shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas" the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That" the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

I'll hand these to page Viktor.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Capreol, in my riding.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas" since October 2009 "insured PET scans" are being performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask our new page Kyla to bring it to the Clerk.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, regarding denial of angioplasty and subsequent follow-up treatment of multiple sclerosis sufferers:

"Whereas it is estimated over 75,000 Canadians, of whom many thousands are from Ontario, suffer from MS; and

"Whereas chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, or CCSVI, has been found in a high percentage of MS sufferers and is accepted in 47 countries worldwide; and

"Whereas a treatment for CCSVI known as angioplasty has been proven to improve many of the symptoms of MS, vastly improving quality of life and productivity; and

"Whereas in Canada, angioplasty is an effective, low-risk procedure that has been used as a treatment for various medical conditions on veins safely for many years, such as kidney disease, superior vena cava syndrome and liver disease; and

"Whereas over 12,500 procedures have been carried out globally, with many reports of improvement in mental functioning, circulation and mobility and, over time, marked improvement to quality of life; and

"Whereas any medical procedure incurs risks and is not always successful. CCSVI angioplasty risk in controlled trials is negligible; and

"Whereas residents of Ontario with MS are being denied access to this simple procedure, are being forced to leave the country at their own personal expense and are denied proper access to follow-up care and testing; and

"Whereas progressive MS sufferers beyond pharmaceutical intervention have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality when a simple, safe and effective procedure is available;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allow people with multiple sclerosis to obtain angioplasty in their own province and in their own country;

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario insure payment of such treatment; and

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allow post-procedure testing and follow-up consistent with any other disease."

I shall sign this and send it to the clerks' table.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

I affix my name in full support.

#### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that has been collected by Mr. Bruce Knox, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Rachel to bring it to the Clerk.

#### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It has been brought to me by Ruth Anne and Harold Jacques of Farmstead Lane in Meadowvale. I'd like to read it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars,



clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

I'm pleased to affix my signature, to support this petition and to ask page Andrew to carry it for me.

1600

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham, and it's from a number of people: Murray Patterson, Dave and Pearl Rickert, Earla Jose, Lou Speciale, Melanie and Rod MacArthur, amongst others. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle, and Lakeridge Road in Durham."

I'm pleased to sign it and present this petition to Erica, one of the new pages here.

### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have this petition from the people of Hanmer and Val Caron.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my favourite page, Jonathan, to bring it to the Clerk.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

"Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply-managed commodities; and

"Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We applaud the Ontario government's support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector."

It's signed by folks from the GTA who understand how important this is, and I'll give it to Viktor.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present—I'm getting thousands of these petitions, so I hope the minister is listening. It reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and" indeed "a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and



"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle, and Lakeridge Road in Durham."

This is signed by Tammy St. Martin, Sandra Goding, Jeff Groen, Veronica Goding, and the list goes on. I support this and present the petition to Kyla.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm getting thousands of petitions with regard to the risk management program. This one came in from Rosemary Fyfe, a family farm operator from the great area of Orangeville, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

"Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply-managed commodities; and

"Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We applaud the Ontario government's support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Jonathan.

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would look to present more petitions on the greenbelt, but there's one here that's pressing and people have asked me to present it.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses" are struggling;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services;

veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present to it Andrew, one of the new pages here.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUILDING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING YOUTH TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT LA FONDATION DE FAMILLES ET LA RÉUSSITE CHEZ LES JEUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance / Projet de loi 179, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne l'adoption et les soins et l'entretien.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Indeed, it is a pleasure to speak about Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Maybe I'll just take a few minutes to talk about the intent of this particular piece of legislation and review what the bill intends to do.

This legislation is the next step in our improvements to the Ontario adoption system. If passed, it will allow more kids the chance to succeed with a forever family and improve outcomes for kids who may not have adoption in their future.

This is really, really important, the intent of the legislation. Whether we're children, whether we're husbands, whether we're wives, the sense of family is, I think, what makes our country, our province, our communities as strong as they really are.

Just to talk about the adoption piece a little bit, we saw an increase of about 21% in domestic adoptions last year alone. We'll continue to build on the work of the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare and strive to increase adoptions.

Just to give some sense, right now there are about 9,000 crown wards in Ontario and only about 10% of them are adopted each year.



1610

The current legislation is one barrier to some of these children finding their forever families. Currently, crown wards are not eligible for adoption if they are subject to an access order, and approximately 75% of crown wards have access orders, so that puts a huge restriction on moving about 75% of the cases forward. This legislation, if passed, will mean that an access order will terminate automatically when a child is placed for adoption. This means the children's aid societies can plan for adoption of crown wards even where an access order is in effect. So it opens up that spectrum.

In cases where it would be in the child's best interest to maintain contact with their birth families or other persons after adoption, the courts could make an openness order, making the system somewhat more flexible. Kids in permanent homes are almost 25% more likely to complete high school and 50% more likely to continue school at the post-secondary level.

To sum that up: As we provide a stable environment for children and young adults, they'll succeed. I just commented on how they succeed in school, but it also provides them with a better understanding of life learning and integrating with society, even past school. For those kids who weren't adopted, these kids are our collective responsibility. This is not to divulge the responsibility of government for kids who are in the custody of the system.

Right now, when a youth leaves the care of a children's aid society before age 18, they cannot continue receiving the supports they had in care. Some of that includes financial supports, social worker assistance, and the social and emotional support of a foster or group home. If passed, these changes will allow youth whose care arrangements ended at age 16 or 17 to return to CAS to receive both financial and non-financial support until the age of 21, because in many cases when these kids leave the system, they really fall between the cracks, even in the larger sphere, which sometimes make it even more difficult to bring them back into society.

This piece of legislation would only move the yardstick further ahead to give a stable home—frankly, I'm going to say to those kids who need it the most. They live in a very unstable environment. They probably find themselves in a situation where they come from a home that wasn't a very pleasant place to be. I know in my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West I have a very good relationship with the CASs, and although we don't speak about particular cases, I get the sense of the work that they do and how important it is to look after these kids. The more we can place them in home settings, the better, not just for the children and young adults but society as a whole.

I look forward, as we debate this piece of legislation, to the opposition parties supporting such a move because it's certainly a move in the right direction. But having said that, sometimes I worry about getting their support—although I think in general they say they will support this—from the lack of support of other initiatives

where this government tried to support families and kids. For example, they voted against new funding for the Ontario child benefit. They voted against the help to support crown wards. So what does this mean? This means that they voted against recreational, educational, cultural and social opportunities for kids in care.

This also means that they voted against an opportunity to help older youth in care requiring savings and financial literacy skills to support the transition to adulthood.

For example, one of the opposition leaders called full-day learning, which we think is a piece of education that certainly is supported across the world, and Ontario is a leader—one of the leaders of the opposition referred to full-day learning as being like a shiny new car, as a frill.

They voted in general against recent increases to child treatment centres. That means that about 3,000 children and youth with special needs would still be waiting for treatment if they were in office.

So I think we need to, hopefully, overcome this sort of non-support from the opposition to move this forward.

For example, when the present federal government—the federal government that just got re-elected yesterday—took over \$1 billion away from Ontario families for child care, none of the opposition made any attempt to lobby for Ontario's families, Ontario's kids.

They failed to support 22,000 new child care spaces.

As you can see, we have things, for example, like the Ontario child benefit, which will assist more than one million kids. These are kids who are also under the support of children's aid societies. There's the investment in autism that we almost tripled under our present government to move those yardsticks forward.

Let me just talk about something that I think is very important. We're here in this place, and frankly, I will admit that sometimes we think we know best. I know that, regardless of party stripes, we are all here for the right reasons, but sometimes we forget the folks in what I call the trenches, and it impacts them the most. They're the ones delivering those services that the governments need to support. We forget and may not do a very good job of listening. So I just want to take a minute to quote some of the things, for example, that people said when this piece of legislation was introduced. Some of these folks, frankly, I believe, without going into a lot of detail, were the ones who advocated for these changes, because they care so much about the challenges that we face. I'm just going to take a minute to quote some of these folks. I think it's very, very important to hear what somebody outside of this place would have to say.

"The minister's action today"—this was the day that the legislation was introduced. I had the privilege of being in the media studio when the minister announced this piece of legislation, and a huge number of supporters were in the media studio there in support of this. I'll just read some of those quotes:

"The minister's action today shows an impressive grasp of the issues facing prospective parents and kids in care. This package of legislative changes and other supports for prospective parents and children will result in



better outcomes for crown wards and help make it possible for families to open their homes and hearts to waiting children." That's Will Falk, co-chair, Adoption working group, Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption, and adoptive father of two boys.

"OACAS applauds Minister Broten and the McGuinty government for this comprehensive and thoughtful announcement. These changes, taken collectively, are important steps in making 'family' a reality for many, many children and youth in CAS care. We look forward to working with the government on the details of the proposals and putting Ontario on the map as a leader in supporting children and families." Mary Ballantyne, executive director, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, made that particular statement.

1620

Another quote, from Pat Convery, executive director of the Adoption Council of Ontario: "The Adoption Council of Ontario is encouraged by Minister Broten's comments today. The leadership, reform and supports proposed will greatly assist the adoption community—professionals and adoptive families—in finding permanent homes for more children. We have a lot of work to do and today we are affirmed that the government is part of the team—we will accomplish so much more when we work together."

Let me tell you what Adam Diamond, YouthCAN coordinator, said: "If you were in a family and left home at 16, you could go back. Kids in care can't—once they leave, the door is closed. It's great that government is making sure the door is kept open so that youth who need help can go back to their children's aid society for support."

I am the proud father of four children and nine grandchildren. We always kind of wish—and this is on the side—that as your kids grow and they go on their own, they don't come back. But they do come back, and they bring grandkids back with them. We had a simple policy at home: that our door was always open, not only to my kids but their friends. I must tell you that some Sunday mornings we were kind of—not worried, but as you walked downstairs, especially if you had a late night on Saturday night, "So who's sleeping on the couch tonight? Or who did they pull the blankets out for and is sleeping on the floor?"

Sometimes it was their friends, because they stuck around and they knew that our door was always open. Not that those kids didn't have a place to go, but they knew that when they came to our place, the doors were always open and breakfast would be on. Mom and Dad would do the dishes afterwards and everyone would have a good time. So to deprive some of these kids of that kind of life, who, through no fault of their own, ended up where they are—I think we, as a society, need to do more to try to achieve that.

I'll carry on with some of the things that some folks said. Jade Maitland, another YouthCAN coordinator: "This special support for crown wards attending post-secondary is fantastic. It puts youth in care on the same playing field as other youth."

We were marginalizing some of these kids—once again, through no fault of their own—because they felt into that bracket of not having a stable home. They were different than other kids. They have different abilities. And we were the ones who would say that that was okay.

Let me tell you what John Beaucage, aboriginal adviser to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, had to say: "As aboriginal adviser to the minister, I am pleased to see there is a strengthening of customary care as an option for permanency. There are also a number of provisions that allow for a greater reliance on traditional values and cultural sensitivity to work with First Nations and aboriginal communities. All of these items together mean that there will be more positive outcomes for our people in the future."

I have Alderville First Nation in my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West—an excellent group of folks that I visit on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, Chief JimBob Marsden and I correspond through Facebook sometimes. Having visited their homes in Alderville, they are—we're all Canadians, but they bring some traditions that we need to cherish and nurture. So anything we can do under this particular file of adoption to keep that torch burning, to protect their culture—it's really what a lot of it is about: their traditions. This piece of legislation certainly addresses that.

Cheryl Appell, co-chair, adoption working group, Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption: What did she say? "These changes have been advocated for many years...." As I said before, these are things that these folks on the ground have been telling governments for a long time. I'll go on with her quote: "And it is wonderful to see that, finally, there has been the courage to put this plan forward. This legislative change will be a powerful and welcomed tool in the hands of children's aid societies, who bear responsibility for finding a permanent home for children who cannot return to their family of origin, and it introduces new judicial responsibility, which I believe will also be welcomed."

Ene Underwood, chair, Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare: What did she have to say? "The commission is very encouraged by these important new measures. They are child-focused and will open new doors to permanency for children who are currently crown wards. They make room for maintaining connections with birth families while removing barriers to connecting kids to adoptive families. The change to allow 16- and 17-year olds to return and receive CAS support is an excellent measure and reflects what all of us as parents would want to do for our children."

I could go on with some of these quotes. What this really tells us, I believe, is that Bill 179 is in the right direction. It's moving forward. If this piece of legislation goes to committee, we'll have an opportunity for people—once again, I'm referring to the people on the ground, dealing with issues—to give us, and the opposition, of course, more suggestions, more ideas on how we can make this better, knowing that there are some restrictions and barriers that we have to work around.



I think any time we're dealing with children, we have to be very, very cognizant of some of those restrictions—well, I'm going to use the word "restriction," but maybe that's not the right terminology—that we always face. They're vulnerable, and I guess we want to make sure that the vulnerable, these children and youth, are not endangered or that people take advantage of those circumstances.

As I wind down my time here, I strongly encourage members of all three parties to really get behind this. This is to improve the welfare of our children—children that, frankly, are most in need, as we nurture them through these challenging times. They'll each make contributions to our society as they grow older. And as we get older, these kids will hopefully look after us.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak about Bill 179 today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to respond to the speech from the member from Northumberland—Quinte West on Bill 179. As was mentioned, the PC Party is supportive of the bill. Our critic, the member for Dufferin—Caledon, has spoken to it.

The member, I have to point out, talked about and listed off some things that the opposition has voted against, and he's correct. Often, there are things we'd like to vote for but, unfortunately, they bundle things that we have to vote against. A good example right now is Bill 173, the budget bill. It has some 41 schedules. Well, there are some things we do like in the bill, but they usually have a couple little nuggets—hidden tax increases or another tax increase—that we don't agree with. You get one vote for or against, so that means we end up voting against that. If they would stop putting aspects of the bill in that we just can't support, that might change.

1630

But this bill we do support. It's about taking kids who are crown wards, who are not eligible for adoption, and allowing more of them to be adopted, and that is certainly a positive thing where there are a lot of families out there that would like to adopt. More importantly, for those children, it provides a chance for them to have a family and, of course, all the benefits that go along with that, in hopes that that will bring positive change and benefits, as the member talked about, like finishing school and having more opportunity to succeed in life.

We look forward to this bill going to committee after second reading debate and to getting some input on the technicalities of the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened to my Liberal colleague across the floor, and I think he recited the speech he was given fairly well.

But there are a couple of issues in this bill that I think need to be addressed. When the government introduced this bill, I called around to three or four of the First

Nation child and family service agencies in northern Ontario to ask if the government had sat down and consulted with them on this legislation. I was shocked to learn that that hadn't happened.

Now, as most members of this Legislature would know, issues of crown wardship and issues of placing children for adoption are very, very big issues for First Nation communities, First Nation families, and the child and family service organizations which serve First Nations. These are big issues because we unfortunately have a sorry history where children's aid societies would go into First Nation communities, take children and then place them for adoption with non-native families. This was all done very, very quickly.

This legislation, at least on its face, would provide for very quick and speedy adoption, or could be taken that way. So while New Democrats support the general intent of this legislation, we're a bit shocked and surprised at the lack of consultation with First Nations, and we want to ask a lot of questions when it goes to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The member for Chatham—Kent—Essex.

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Thank you, Speaker. Chatham—Kent—Essex, and perhaps someday it will be known as Chatham—Kent—Leamington.

I'm pleased to rise and make some comments on what we just heard from my colleague from Northumberland—Quinte West, but first I just wanted to mention that many, many years ago, my mother's family adopted a little girl. There were five little girls left without parents; their parents were killed in a car accident. The community felt that those five little girls should not be placed in homes far away from each other.

Now, I suspect—I don't know, but I suspect—that the rules in place at that time were very simple, if many rules over adoption existed at all. But you could see where the community came together and decided that these five little girls, who were very, very young, should stay in the community, and indeed they did. They were adopted by five different families, and they got along extremely well. Now we're in an age where we have oversight and rules and ideals and ideas. The member from Northumberland—Quinte West went through a lot of that and explained it quite well.

I think a very important part of this bill is that right now there are 9,000 crown wards in Ontario and only about 10% of them are adopted each year. Clearly, we can do better, as a society and as a government, to ensure that these young people, and into their teenaged years, have an opportunity to find what we have called a "forever family." Currently, legislation is a barrier to some of these children ever finding a home, and this bill talks about changing that, so they can find a life with a family that will love and cherish them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm pleased to add a couple of comments to the speech given by the member from Northumberland—Quinte West on this bill, which in prin-



ciple our party supports. It's interesting, in looking at bills like this, to consider what has happened in a world like the world of adoption over the course of the past 10 or, need I not say, 20 years. Things have changed. There are too many children who don't have parents; there always have been. There are too many parents who want children for us to have legal obstacles in the way to prevent that.

This bill, if it's passed, deals with two issues: access orders to make it easier to adopt children who are crown wards, and making it easier for children between the ages of 15 and 16 who have left care to return to the care of the children's aid societies. That's a really important aspect because, let's face it: As aware as we know children of 15 to 16 may be in today's world—because that's something that has changed as well—they're not aware enough to be on the street taking care of themselves with any real hope of amounting to what becomes a responsible and independent adult going forward. So I'm happy to see that this was contemplated in the creation of the bill.

As far as an access order is concerned, an access order allows parents and siblings and other family members or close friends to have access to a child while they are a ward of the crown. Many of these access orders go unused. Crown wards are unable to be adopted if they have an access order attached to them. So again, this is an issue of taking the legalities and simplifying them so that children who are prevented from being available for adoption, who desperately need a good home, can be adopted by a good, loving set of parents at any given time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Northumberland—Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I want to thank the members for their comments. I sense in general that there is support. Yes, it will go to committee and we will have some public consultations. As I said in my remarks, that's always to strengthen it.

I just make a comment to the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka. By the way, I have to be somewhat nice to him because my son is in his riding. He was down here the other week, and they had a good chat. He made mention of my comments about the other parties not supporting some of the legislation because of other things in those pieces of legislation. Maybe not all of them who are there, but certainly he was here when omnibus bills were the order of the day—and I see that my good friend from Durham is here, and he would know that—when there was no consultation; none whatsoever. So it's kind of rich to hear those kinds of comments when we are debating these bills, but I certainly appreciate his comments.

It's the same with the member from Kenora—Rainy River. Yes, we need to hear about this. He talks about aboriginal consultation. I'm not sure what the title was, but the minister hosted a summit with aboriginal leaders not too long ago to talk about these very issues in a very

early stage of our legislation. So one would say: "When is it enough? When is it not enough?" There are 106 or 107 members in this House. We could always argue about what "enough" and "not enough" are, and whatever. But the fact of the matter is, the bill is being debated and the bill will go to committee, and with lots of input.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I am thrilled with the opportunity to speak on this this afternoon. I know that there was a lineup for people who wanted to participate, and I got to the front of the line as quickly as possible. With that, I'll bring this little I know in as long as a period of time as I am able to extend the time.

It is a serious and important topic. I'd say that Bill 179 was introduced here a couple of weeks ago—April 13. In fact, our member in the chair, the member from York—Simcoe, is well versed and thoroughly convinced as an advocate—I think a well-informed advocate—on this topic. I would only say that what I've learned, basically, probably came from things that she has said and from working with my constituents.

1640

To wrap a little bit around—that may not come in in the main briefing notes that members use. We are on the record as being supportive, and we are on the record as trying to move this into committee so that we get it right.

There's lots changing, some of which is direct, by this bill. There's a couple of things that have been mentioned that, I think more importantly, put some wrapping around this. The member from Kenora—Rainy River spoke in response to the member from Northumberland—Quinte West about the First Nations issue, which is quite unique and separate—and I think perhaps they'll be speaking after me in a very short time—and which is important.

Those families are different. The whole issue of traditions and culture is very important. Perhaps some years ago we were all wrong and all ignorant in terms of the importance of symmetry in a person's life. I suspect that in some ways it still exists today. We expect that—how would you say?—the normalized cultural zones that people live in and are comfortable with suit their references in life, which I think is important.

Also, when I relate this back to the government's broader policy on the poverty reduction task force, as an example—we know a lot of families that do end up in problems because of the economy. Now, I'm not blaming all the problems in the economy on Premier McGuinty, but part of them I am. When you don't recognize the economic unit of society—the family—and support it in the most obvious ways, whether they're First Nations, new Canadians or whatever their reference point, that is important. We see families under stress today. Some of it is affordability of the essentials. Whether it's food, heat for your home, gas for your car, proper nutrition—these are important things. When we see the family in trouble, we see problems where children need to have care providers.



Even in the last budget—this is the budget I'm referring to, Madam Speaker. It's the 2011 budget presented here in the House. There's a section in here, the child welfare section—I'm referring to page 120: "Across Ontario, child welfare services are currently provided by 53 children's aid societies." I could say that, in a general sense, having worked with the children's aid in my riding of Durham, along with other members—this is non-partisan, and I heard earlier the NDP leading this—they are all in freeze mode, and the more remote ones even more so; resource-poor for the most vulnerable members of our shared society.

The plan here in the budget—the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare. "Ontario is helping more crown wards succeed in school and move on to post-secondary education with support such as education championship teams that offer mentorship, peer support, motivation and guidance. The government continues to explore options for further enhancing its crown wards success strategy to improve educational outcomes and smooth the transition to adulthood."

This all speaks to opportunity, not more red tape. "Opportunity" I believe is the operative word, and it links very nicely with "hope." A child without hope is a child in trouble. This is paramount. As a parent of five children—and now six. I mentioned the last time I was speaking that my youngest son, Andrew, and his wife, Alison, had a little baby girl, Alexandra. It's wonderful. She's doing well. She's three weeks this Friday.

My point in bringing this up is, it takes abilities to raise a child and all that, but it really takes a family, the economic unit and the extended family—the rights of grandparents and access to these things. Somehow, when you get into children's aid, you end up with another kind of institutional model. We've moved out of that, and I think this bill goes some way to addressing some of that; I really do.

It goes on here—there's a bit of a study going on. It says, "The government is acting on the recommendations of the commission to consolidate children's aid societies." There won't be 53 of them. They're going to be bigger and—you thought I was going to say "better," didn't you? No, they're going to be bigger, they're going to be more bureaucratic and less family-focused. Show me the door.

I'm concerned about that provision in the reference we're talking about, this restructuring under the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and provision of care and maintenance, especially for the two groups mentioned. The groups I'm mentioning are the access to crown wards and the 15- to 16-year-olds returned to care.

Again, I am not, in any way, except listening here and thinking about the most vulnerable members of our society—children. I suspect we should be paying close care and attention because the government is planning on collapsing the 53 probably into—I hope they don't collapse into LHINs, these large bureaucratic, unresponsive, unaccountable political appointments that run

the health care system. Ask yourself: Is the health care system any better since they brought in the LHINs?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Yes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I hear members on the government side saying "yes." I see it as another barrier to the autonomy of the local hospital board, in conjunction with the ministry and the community, to say that one size does not fit all. I only bring that up because I know it's a sensitive spot for them. They're probably quite aware of that, if they're listening. I won't mention any more than that because I know that it would upset them.

The numbers don't tell the whole story. I haven't got quite enough time. I may have to ask for more time on this because I'm barely getting to the notes here, which is a problem.

This is from the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Some of them don't want to hear the information, it's apparent to me. I've said that we're supportive of this. I'm just adding value to it at the moment.

The numbers tell the story in this case. The approximate number of children adopted in Ontario families each year through the three provincial adoption services—public, private domestic and intercontinental, or inter-country, really—is 1,600. The approximate number of crown wards in 2007-08 was 9,400; 822 crown wards adopted in 2007-08; one in six Ontario couples struggle with infertility in their lifetime; and 1,500 babies born in Ontario in 2006 through in vitro fertilization.

All of us in our constituency offices have dealt with almost all these issues: the adoption process and its accessibility, as well as the desire of young couples to have their own child. Barriers like costs, lack of information, system weakness, location, work constraints and stigma prevent many Ontarians from accessing these services and keep many children waiting to be adopted.

This Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption is to provide advice in how to improve—I believe that is one of the reference points in the legislation we're discussing here. I've made a few notes here so that I don't completely just speak extemporaneously, if that's a proper word.

The content here is—I'm trying to keep it light-hearted. It's sort of like a Liberal speech, really. It's quite enthusiastic about it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Hang on here for a moment. This one here: "Ontarians cannot afford not to fix the system." This is from the expert panel; we're not going off the cuff here. "It costs at least \$32,000 a year to keep a crown ward in care." Thirty-two thousand dollars? Wow. Maybe a grandmother, if she got the \$32,000 and was appropriately trained health-wise and in her resilience and acceptance, could be accommodated here. Give her part of the \$32,000. Have a loving—I'm telling you, there are some simple answers here that have not been very easily acceptable.



"It costs significantly less to provide support and subsidies to help adoptive families parent children." This is where the grandparent argument comes in.

1650

I'm sure parents today, like myself—I just pray to God, and quite seriously mean that, with all five of my children that live in different countries, I might say. One of them is moving to Hong Kong next summer, two are in England and one on the Isle of Man. I hope their families and their marriages last. I pray; that's about all I can do. This is where the issues become quite complicated when you're trying to be caring for your family.

How about new Canadians who experience problems? These things here are what I'm talking about. We don't want those children moved out of that cultural community. I still go back to the First Nations issue of how poorly we've looked after that in the past.

"The stated cost of keeping a child in care does not include the long-term cost to society of a child who grows up without a stable family. Former crown wards are less likely to finish high school, and more likely to rely on social assistance and live in homeless shelters." This is from the expert panel report. It's a serious problem.

"For the sake of the more than 9,000 crown wards in the province—many of whom could be adopted—children in other jurisdictions waiting to be adopted, and the families anxious to adopt, the province must act now. It must create an integrated, responsive adoption system that works for children and families."

I am completely in support of that approach. If that's the intent of the bill, it's no wonder our leader, Tim Hudak, has encouraged us to take a very close look. It just makes very good sense for the children and the families involved—not the money and the LHINs or the other kinds of bureaucracies that are there to sort of protract the experience.

"Ontario cannot afford to not fund assisted reproduction services"—that's in the report as well, but it's not specific in this bill, I will say that. That's been called for and has actually been implemented in other provinces, and it's not going to go away. I have not heard a response to that. It's a complicated issue. In vitro fertilization can be expensive and can be unsuccessful. So a question of fairness and equity arises in all of the discussions that I've read on this particular issue. I do have more information, Madam Speaker. I think I may have gotten it from your office, actually.

Excerpts from Raising Expectations, the recommendations of the expert panel:

"Adoption in Ontario now—the basics

"Ontarians who want to build or add to their families through adoption have three options: public, private domestic and inter-country adoption." We've seen this in our riding offices quite frequently. People adopting from other countries is a growing trend because they can't get children right here from Ontario. "All three are regulated by the provincial government and, in all instances, the best interests of the child are deemed paramount."

That can't be ignored. Let's remember, even us here talking about this, have we talked to the children? In fact, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, in his very insightful remarks—he's been here a long time; he's been Attorney General; he's been a few things. He knows that certain groups in certain areas of the province need to have their needs met and considered. The Far North might be different than an urban centre like Toronto, but I think that's important to make sure that the children remain at the very centre and where it's best for them in their life journey.

"Patterns of adoption in Ontario have changed significantly over time and continue to change"—as they should. "Over the past decade, for instance, there has been a decrease in the number of private domestic adoptions and a slight increase in inter-country and public adoptions." Public adoptions would be the ones who use an agency, I gather. "In Ontario, as in many other jurisdictions, there are many fewer newborn babies available for adoption than there were several decades ago, and more families are choosing to adopt from countries like China and, more recently, Ethiopia." Remember, keeping a child first is pretty important.

"Each year for the past five years, approximately 1,600 children were adopted into families in Ontario through one of these three services. The largest number—more than 800 a year—are public adoptions, followed by about 650 inter-country adoptions, and 150 private ... adoptions."

I'm hearing that even there, some of these foreign adoptions cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, with the trips and educational time spent on it. But the time spent with the child remains the central point. One of the questions I have is, how long does it take? I see the minister is here, and she might want to respond. What is the actual length of time in which a child that's been put up for adoption is able to get through the process? There is some red tape in here, and I would say that.

One of them is the second component of the bill. The legislation deals with children aged 16 to 18—I think that they would be a little harder to adopt; I don't know—who want to return to care if they have left for any reason. Currently, any child that enters care before the day they turn 16 is eligible to be in care until their 18th birthday. If a child aged 16 to 18 less a day leaves care they are not able to return, as the age of protection in Ontario is 16. In other words, if they leave before they're 16, they're finished. The legislation will allow any child aged 16 to 18 less a day who has previously been in care, but left for any reason, to return to the care of CAS. If the child voluntarily returns to care, they must sign a voluntary service provision, which allows them access to a range of supports and makes them eligible for the extended maintenance program until the age of 21.

Not to leave any sort of uncertainty, I believe that the children's aids I have worked with in Durham are well-intended boards of volunteers that are acting under the regulations as they exist, so I don't blame them for any—but they have some financial constraints about the



provision of care. That needs to be addressed, and I don't think it is, except that I see in the budget that they're going to amalgamate them all, save some administrative costs and create bigger, more remote bureaucracies, is the way I can see it. But that is, overall, keeping the child first in this whole debate. Remember, it's compulsory debate time that's here. We're making our admissions right up front, that we're in support. We are in support to the extent that we would like to see the bill move to some hearing process to clarify things.

This legislation is quite similar to the Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Bill 210), which was passed in 2006 by this government. That change was also to terminate access orders upon the placement of a child with a family, and allow for openness orders if it is in the best interests of the child. However, it appears that in five years since, nothing has happened. One would ask why. The number of crown wards in care remains the same today as it did in 2006. Why is this the case, and how will this bill fix that?

The Expert Panel on Fertility and Adoption tabled their report in June 2009, asking for adoption reforms such as these. This was a panel and report commissioned by the McGuinty Liberals, and the timing of this legislation is questionable.

There's only a little while left here in the Legislature. We're heading towards an election. Let's get this done. Let's think of the care of the children. That's what this is about.

Currently, some CASs provide subsidies (at the discretion of the individual CASs)—and this is important, and I do support this—to families who adopt crown wards. While the minister said she would like there to be [a] consistent adoption subsidy, there is no mention of it in the legislation, and she has said she will be seeking the advice of experts. One more reason to have the hearings.

If there are subsidies available, and there are some reports here on subsidies, especially grandparents being adoptive, I think this could do—remember, I told you that it's \$32,000 in care a year per child, and so—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Comments and questions? The member for Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker. I'll be speaking to this bill in around 10 minutes' time, I suspect.

It's important that this bill get into committee. Here we are, and the member has just noted that we're rising here on June 2, or earlier if the House prorogues, and anything can happen at this point in a provincial election year. My concern is that the bill will not be completed.

The government can say, "That's fine; we'll time-allocate it," for instance. The government could do that and give it, oh, half a day of public hearings. I put to you that the most important contribution to this bill's progress will be the public process, the public hearings: participation by experts, professionals, participation by parents, by adoptive parents, by potentially adoptive parents, by foster parents, by any other number of people who are working out there in the community with kids.

1700

As New Democrats, we have no intention of belabouring this bill, and I'm surprised that it hasn't been the subject matter of some discussion by House leaders about wrapping up second reading and getting this into committee. Michael Prue, our member for Beaches—East York—by the way, that riding elected a New Democrat last night, defeated a Liberal incumbent. But our critic and our leader, Andrea Horwath, specifically asked Michael to deal with this bill and its progress through the House and especially at committee. He's eager to get on with committee work, but if this government thinks that one half-day or one or two days is going to be adequate to address the issues that are here and that prevail, it's sadly mistaken and it will do a disservice.

We're prepared to get this thing moving along. Why isn't the government?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to be able to speak in support of this bill and respond to the comments by the member from Durham.

I just wanted to note that he made some comments about the amalgamation of some of the family and children's services, children's aid boards, whatever they happen to be called in your community. I guess I understand why he's very negative about amalgamations and assumes they're forced. I certainly know, having been on a school board when the Conservative government was in place, that the boards were subject to shotgun marriages and were not necessarily happy about the idea of amalgamation.

But what I would like to share with the member is that in this specific instance under our government, where children's aid boards are amalgamating, it's because the children's aid boards are doing so voluntarily. Neighbouring boards have sat down and had a discussion and said, "We're spending a lot on administration. We're spending a lot on duplicating our services. We could actually serve the children much more effectively, much more efficiently, if we voluntarily decided that we will amalgamate."

I just wanted to assure the member from Durham that any of these children's aid amalgamations are totally voluntary and done because it will improve service for children.

With respect to the bill itself, just to say what the bill will do, it will enable a lot of children who are prevented from being adoptable currently because of access orders—it will recognize that those children should be able to be adopted, and under this new legislation, access orders will not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's always a pleasure to hear from my colleague the member from Durham, because he has an insightful thing or two to say—or three or four—about almost everything that goes through this Legislature, and he's never an unwilling participant in debate.



In this particular case, I want to refer to comments that he made generally to the bill in terms of what happens to children's aid societies in light of the enactment of the bill.

There are 1,500 potential adoptive families in Ontario right now, and they're waiting, I dare say impatiently, for a home study to be completed so they can become adoptive parents. The sooner, the better, I would say on behalf of all of them. The ministry has to deal with wait-lists for a home study before the adoption process can move forward, and that places additional burdens on the children's aid societies themselves. As we know, Speaker, they've had trouble balancing their budgets with the mandated services that they have to provide.

In the last couple of years very particularly, I can speak very personally for children's aid in York region. If we go back even as recently as not this year but last year, we had these people on our doorsteps—my colleagues the member from Newmarket–Aurora and the member for York–Simcoe—looking for assistance in making this government come across with just the same, forget about an increase, and we were successful in making enough noise to have that happen. So to see their burdens relieved, that's fine, but there are more burdens that have to be addressed. Some children's aid societies have stopped or have not created a wait-list for home studies, and families are forced, then, to rely on private providers, because so few adoptions are going through the CASs. We can hope that this bill will address some of that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened to my Conservative colleague's speech, and I do want to give him credit. He is somebody who's reasonably well informed on these issues, and he alluded to something which I think needs to be looked at very carefully in committee. The fact of the matter is, most of the children's aid societies in this province are grossly underfunded. Many of them run out of money in December of their fiscal year and then have to try to figure out ways to tide things over in January and February and until the end of March. So they don't have the resources to do the work that needs to be done.

As my other colleague from the Conservative Party pointed out, the money goes to the mandated services, and services involving support for adopted children or support for the adoption process get pushed off. So one of the things that has to be addressed is this: What will the resourcing be of children's aid societies? It's one thing—and we've seen this on several occasions from this government—to pass a law, but if you do not provide the resources to implement the changes in the law, if you do not provide the funding to see it through, then it's all just superficial paper, and you really haven't done much to make the situation better.

Simply passing this legislation without addressing the issue of the underfunding of children's aid societies across Ontario would simply not do the job. That's one of

the issues that we think needs to be addressed before committee: What will the resourcing be in order to make this happen?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to thank the member from Welland, who referred to the importance of hearings—otherwise, we'll be time-allocated—and the member from Thornhill, a good friend and an informed commentator, both on radio and in here.

The member from Kenora–Rainy River, I expect, will be speaking next, and he talked to something that I said: the lack of resources for this very important determinant.

The member from Guelph mentioned something that sort of struck a nerve with me, because I knew her when she was a trustee and I was a trustee once upon a time. She talked about the amalgamation of school boards. That should be understood—I want to clarify the record. They often say things without adequate information. It was called the Sweeney commission, and it was done under the NDP, under David Cooke, and their intent was to amalgamate boards for efficiencies. There was a consultation on that, and the province of Ontario—Premier Harris was the one who looked at the Royal Commission on Learning and the suitability of boards and jurisdictions and coterminous issues. So if you have something bad to say about that—mostly they make these things into negatives. We carried out, in complete fulfillment, equal funding for education for all children in Ontario. That's what actually happened between the royal commission and the Sweeney commission. So I thank you for commenting on and praising Premier Harris's work.

Also, I think it's important in the context of this to look at whether these amalgamations make sense, or the de-amalgamations for perhaps First Nation groups to look after their own issues with custody and support. It is an important opportunity here to recognize those, I'd say, sensitive needs. I don't want to use the words "cultural needs," but I think it's important to those persons.

I looked at the forecast; other speakers may want to look at this. Adoption subsidies aren't used enough, and the minister—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** In fact—and I note that this is disappointing the member from Durham—I'm going to be speaking to this matter next, although I'm eager to hear what my colleague the member from Kenora–Rainy River has to say, in addition to the numerous comments and numerous contributions he's made to this debate up until this moment.

1710

I want to make it clear that on second reading the New Democrats are supporting this bill. I want to make it clear, as I did in that brief commentary a few minutes ago, that New Democrats are eager to see this bill go to committee for thorough consideration in the committee. But we have a time constraint. The legislative calendar



requires this House to rise on June 2. Having said that, I'm sure that New Democrats would be pleased to negotiate with the government an extension of the sitting days of the House. It's something that I'd be eager to do. Or the government can prioritize its various bills that remain on the order paper, and surely this bill is one that should be prioritized.

I am skeptical about some of the claims made by the government with respect to the impact that this bill will have, and one of the sources of that skepticism was referred to by the member for Durham and my friend the member for Kenora—Rainy River when they talked about the whole issue of funding children's aid, family and children's services. Many years ago, when I was a college student, I worked for Niagara region family and children's services in their receiving and assessment centre. I was one of the night staff—a far different type of family and children's services than exists now, because that was some 40 years ago. And over the course of working as a criminal lawyer and handling a good chunk of young offender defences, I became familiar with family and children's services again, because a whole lot of these kids either were in group homes or were foster kids or had other interaction with family and children's services, even to the point of, let's say, therapy or interventions in violent families or unstable families or unhealthy families. I certainly don't want to suggest by any stretch of the imagination that all kids who are in the custody or care of family and children's services end up in young offender court. You don't have to imagine very much to understand that by the time a kid's been bounced around, in and out of a parental home, a parental home that usually has some serious problems with booze or drugs or violence, or abuse of a child—still rampant—that child's going to be pretty damaged and is going to act out in some pretty severe ways.

Regrettably, the criminal justice system, even the young offender system, really hasn't been developed in a way that's very satisfying to either the community or the young people whose lives intersect with it—not very effective at all.

Annually, we have people rising in the chamber on behalf of their family and children's services, their children's aid society, asking the minister about that family and children's services unit being on the verge of literally shutting down, staff on the cusp of being laid off. The member for Kenora—Rainy River talked about the mandated services, basically the core services. These agencies are having a hard enough time performing those core services, those mandated services, never mind ones that legislatively they can, if they're compelled to, avoid.

There's a very interesting bill that's coming before this House on Thursday of this week during private members' public business. It's Bill 183, and it's being put forward by a New Democrat from Trinity—Spadina, which also elected a federal New Democrat last night, Olivia Chow, who pundits—who are these pundits?—said was in trouble. Give me a break. She cleaned up. She had a plurality that would choke a horse. Olivia

Chow has championed her constituents and has been an incredibly effective member of Parliament.

Now, I should mention, just as an aside, that Malcolm Allen down in Welland—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. I'd ask the Minister of Economic Development to come to order.

Member for Welland, continue.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I've asked you to come to order.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I mentioned that in Welland we re-elected another New Democrat who was supposed to have been in trouble, Conservatives nipping at his heels, Malcolm Allen. Malcolm Allen had a bigger plurality yesterday than he did two and a half, two and three-quarter years ago, in what was a pretty tough campaign and a pretty dirty, little nasty campaign, too, but that's all done and over with.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I ask the relevancy of the comments to the adoption bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'll ask the member to continue his remarks consistent with the bill being discussed.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Speaker, I thank you very much for the intervention, and I appreciate your guidance, because what we're talking about is the financing of children's aid societies, the financing of family and children's services. You can't do that without talking about the political responsibility—the legislative and the parliamentary responsibility—to do precisely that. If we're going to talk about the legislative and parliamentary responsibility to fund children's aid societies, we've got to talk about the people who are elected to those Legislatures and to those Parliaments.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The member for Kenora—Rainy River says one of the questions to put to the committee, to put to the government, to put to the minister—who I'm sure is extremely proud of this bill—is, what commitment is the government making in terms of long-term, stable funding? Not those one-shot deals.

Heck, we met with the Ontario Provincial Police Association today; I'm sure you did as well. One of the concerns they had was the need for a minimum of 600 more OPP officers. They also made it clear that these—I was at one just the other day in the government caucus room. The government was announcing a special allocation of police officers to some serious issues—guns and gangs and so on. It looked like General Pinochet and his cabinet because there you've got the Premier with all these military-type, gold-braided, with the caps and all the—what do they call it? Egg salad? Scrambled eggs on the cap?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'm going to remind the member from Welland to maintain his remarks relevant to the bill.



**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I digress. I would ask the Speaker to please consider this: I live down in Welland. There's two ways to get there. I could take the QEW—it's usually faster; it's a direct route—or I can take Highway 8 and Highway 20. That takes a little longer, but I'm still going to Welland, and it's a lot more colourful and interesting. So if you don't mind, I'll take Highway 8 and Highway 20 to get to where I'm going on this bill.

The bill that's coming forward on Thursday—and let's see how members respond to this proposition by Mr. Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, the riding that elected a New Democrat last night to the federal Parliament—is an amendment to the Ombudsman Act. Bear with me. It's a very important bill because the amendment to the Ombudsman Act is to the following effect: The Ombudsman may investigate designated public bodies in respect of, amongst other things, "a society within the meaning of the Child and Family Services Act." This is something that this government that has dug its heels in about. This government that talks about transparency and openness and frankness—horse feathers, bull spit, far from it.

This government talks about openness and transparency, yet it has dug its heels in when it comes to extending to the Ombudsman the authority to exercise his jurisdiction when it comes to, amongst other things, a society within the meaning of the Child and Family Services Act.

1720

That proposal by Mr. Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, on Thursday during private members' public business is probably critical to the success of any proposal being made by the government in the course of its proposal contained in Bill 179. Think about it: The Ombudsman could actually investigate the level of funding and its inadequacy or adequacy for the responsibilities that children's aid societies are being called upon to do in this effort, supposedly, to increase the adoption of kids currently not being adopted.

One of the interesting things that the expert panel spoke about was the fixation on infants, that by and large most people want an infant, not a toddler, not a teenager, not a kid with special needs. The expert panel was very clear in advising that if children's aid societies had the capacity to speak with potential adoptive parents and explain to them that it isn't just an infant that can be adopted—you can adopt a toddler, you can adopt an older kid, you can adopt a teenager, you can adopt a kid with special needs—and more than just talking to the potential adoptive parents about that proposition, talking to them about the kind of supports that they will be eligible to receive, including financial support.

The member for Durham made mention of grandparents raising grandkids. You know that Paul Miller, our member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, has been on that file since his election here four years ago. We have had grandmothers come here pleading, pleading with this government, asking for some modest financial support as they're rearing their grandchildren.

We also witnessed the disgrace, the shameful disgrace of the Liberal McGuinty government when it effectively told parents to surrender their kid with special needs up to the custody of children's aid societies because that's the only way that that kid could get the treatment or therapy that kid needed—and parents were doing it. Parents were surrendering up their children out of love for their children and after having been told by the government itself that that's the only way that kid is going to get medical treatment, therapy, rehab, any number of things; that's the only way that kid is going to have some special needs addressed. And this government pretends to have any interest in families at all? This government uses this bill to attempt to deliver the message that it cares about unadopted kids? This government is pretty transparent when it's demonstrating its failure to address the needs of children.

Shall we venture into the whole arena of kids with autism and how those kids are abandoned by the Dalton McGuinty Liberals and how their families are forced into bankruptcy because this government arbitrarily terminates IBI treatment for those kids? Please. It's offensive.

And it's not what people expect of governments. I know there are people who that say we should have less government, but there is also a whole lot of people out there who say that we need government to help people who need help. We need government to protect vulnerable people. We need government to care for kids whose families aren't capable of rearing them. We need government to do more than simply create the legislative framework to facilitate the adoption of kids who are subject to access orders. We need a government that's willing to go that extra step and make sure that family and children's services, children's aid societies, have the resources to do the job that they're going to have to do if this is going to work.

I should mention that I have no doubt that there will be some concern raised about, effectively, the negative optioning, the Rogers Cable-style of eliminating the access order. I understand what this bill does—and if I'm wrong, feel free to correct me; I know you would, but you won't because I'm not—that a society can, in effect, by preparing an adoption plan, nullify the access order. What it does is notify the party—presumably the natural parent but not always—that can avail itself of the access order that they have a right to apply to have an openness order.

Why this negative optioning? Why aren't the courts being encouraged to take a more active role in supervising the welfare of kids and, for that matter, the relationship between kids and their natural parents when those kids are being adopted by somebody other than a natural parent? Many times it could be a relative, but many times not.

Why isn't this government doing more to encourage, facilitate and assist grandparents raising their grandkids? Why don't they have some priority in the pecking order? We've heard and read and talked about in this legislation some horror stories of foster parents who have cared for a



kid since that kid was just a tyke until that kid's four, five or six years old and then having that kid taken out of their home in an adoption with people who are strangers to that baby when the foster parents want to be adoptive parents. You know that's the case because you talked about it right here.

Committee is where the bill belongs. Michael Prue, the member from Beaches–East York, is eager to see it there. He's eager to work with people making submissions to that committee.

Rosario Marchese's bill on Thursday is really of paramount importance. It's crucial. The Ombudsman has been crying out, calling out for the authority to expand his jurisdiction to conduct his investigations into, amongst other things, family and children's services for years now. As a matter of fact, there are some who speculate that the Ombudsman, a truly honourable man, was being blocked for his reappointment because he was so enthusiastic and downright aggressive about seeking legislative authority to have the Ombudsman office investigate societies within the meaning of the Child and Family Services Act, or, for that matter, as Marchese's bill goes on, a board within the meaning of the Education Act, or, for that matter, a university, a college of applied arts and technology or other post-secondary institution or, for that matter, a home for special care within the meaning of the Homes for Special Care Act, or a long-term-care home within the meaning of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, or the Office of the Independent Police Review Director within the meaning of the Police Services Act, or a private hospital within the meaning of the Private Hospitals Act. Would this ever reveal the source of a crisis down in Niagara where this government has been shutting down emergency rooms and hospital beds, helter-skelter?

Giving the Ombudsman the authority to inquire into the conduct of a hospital within the meaning of the Public Hospitals Act, like the Niagara Health System and that crummy, unelected, unaccountable, anonymous LHIN that's nothing more than a firewall for Mr. McGuinty and his Liberals and that is shutting down emergency rooms and now shutting down long-term beds—as many as 120 of them in the Welland County General Hospital.

As I say, New Democrats will support this bill to send it to second reading. But we insist that there's a whole lot of work to be done, and if the government's really serious about getting that work done, it will sit down and negotiate a finalization of second reading and begin the committee process as promptly as possible; that is to say, immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to have a chance to speak today and comment on second reading. I will start by saying that I, too, am anxious to see this bill move on to committee because it is so important. It's so important that we move this piece of legislation forward because this piece of legislation will open a door of

opportunity for 75% of the 9,000 crown wards in Ontario. It is so critical that we continue to build upon the success that we have had and the progress that we have made since we've started to facilitate and move forward with respect to adoption and permanency planning for Ontario's crown wards. In fact, as a result of steps taken in 2006 and 2007, last year alone we increased the number of adoptions by 21%. Those steps are important. This piece of legislation fully removes a barrier that has been in place for a long time and that will prevent the planning of a permanency strategy, an adoption strategy, for so many kids in Ontario. For me, that is what it's all about.

1730

If you have an opportunity to ever walk around or learn about the Adoption Resource Exchange, which is one of the initiatives—that we will double the number of them that take place across the province; we'll make sure that they take place more than simply in the city of Toronto—they are opportunities for the matching of willing families with kids who need those families, and they are amazingly emotional opportunities. They hit you in your heart. They make you think about, as the member opposite talked about, the opportunities that might exist for an older child to be adopted. If I can leave this House with one message, as I have been trying to leave for many Ontarians, think about it. Think about it in your heart and in your family, and determine whether you have a place for one of the older children in Ontario who might be looking for that forever family.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I enjoy the presentations from the member from Welland. We share a riding boundary east of Dunnville, west of Wainfleet. I do enjoy his presentations and his style of presentation.

A question has been raised this afternoon. The legislation is fine. We see a lot of good in this legislation. The question: Where are the resources, in particular for certain children's aid societies, smaller children's aid societies?

We know this law will allow a child aged 16 to 18 less a day who had previously been in care to return back to the care of a children's aid society. They can access a fulsome range of supports and they are eligible for what's called the extended maintenance program up to age 21.

But again, the question: additional responsibilities, additional work for children's aid societies; is there budgeting available for this? Many children's aid societies have gotten in trouble, even to the point of filing what's called a section 14 review of their funding model, asking the ministry to come in, show them where they can continue their mandate, show them where the funding is available, how this can possibly be done.

The case has been made to me that the model is unsustainable. This has been going on for the last couple of years, to my knowledge, and I see little action on the part of this government. We know that some children's aid societies have been encouraged to join another



organization or to merge with another children's aid society. Some of them have gotten to the point where they've been laying off staff.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened to my colleague from Welland. He makes the point that, again, one of the reasons this legislation needs to go before committee is because there are some unanswered questions with respect to the financial support that children receive while they are wards of the crown but do not receive as soon as they are adopted. This needs to be addressed.

The expert panel on adoption heard from parents and foster parents who came forward, foster parents who would like to adopt a child who is in their home, but the child has special needs and they know that, under the current rules, if they adopt the child, the special-needs allowance is removed.

The expert panel put it this way:

"We heard from some very dedicated foster parents who said they would like to adopt children currently living in their homes, but primarily due to the significant needs of the children, simply could not afford to do so. Others worried that adoption was not in the best interests of a child if it resulted in a loss of critical services and supports." This panel then observes, "Perversely, as the system is currently structured, a child with special needs has a better chance of having those needs met by remaining in care" of the children's aid society, "a 'solution' that overlooks their basic human need for permanency and emotional attachment, and the province's own need for fiscal responsibility. Simply put, it costs more to keep children with special needs in care than it does to provide adoption subsidies for these children."

We need to hear more—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I think my colleague across the way from Welland took Highway 8 and Highway 20. I think he also took Route 66. I think I'll take the more direct route.

This is about children, and this is about children who are in care who need to find a family. It's about removing the barriers so those children can find a family as soon as possible. I don't think there's anyone here who doesn't know that, after second reading, it will go to committee, it will go for discussion, it will go out to consultation, and those questions, suggestions and considerations will all come forward to that committee as they deliberate this bill—and then it comes back to this House for additional discussion. While people may wax eloquently about, "It needs to go to committee," in fact, it will go to committee. That is the process that we follow here.

I think the important part that we need to remember is that there is a significant number of children who currently have a barrier to adoption. We need to find a way and we need to find a way quickly so that those children can have a family just like other children, so they can have the same opportunities. We know that when

children have a family and the security of a home, the opportunity for them to go to school increases, and the opportunity for them to graduate from secondary school and go on to post-secondary school also increases. Those children do need to have the same opportunity.

I do agree that we need to address those issues around special needs to ensure that all children are treated in an equitable and fair fashion. That is part of the responsibility of a government and of a civil society: to help others who are less fortunate than themselves. But I think the important part here is that we recognize that this is really all about the children and how we can move forward in a positive way to make a real difference in their lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Welland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This isn't about the children; this is about this government's last-ditch effort to identify itself with an issue that is troubling Ontarians and has troubled Ontarians for number of years and to pay lip service to a solution, but not providing the resources so that the solution can be effected.

Look, I give the minister credit for being here today: Many ministers don't follow their bills through the Legislature. But I, for the life of me, don't understand why this minister or her colleague would attempt to say that the funding is going to be there when the funding hasn't been there for IBI treatment for kids with autism, has it, Speaker; when the funding clearly isn't there for hospitals like the hospitals in the Niagara Health System to maintain emergency rooms and long-term beds, is it, Speaker?

The member is quite right: This is the role of government—it's the role of good government. The problem is that we haven't had good government in this province for a good chunk of time. We have government that wants to fiddle around with these sorts of things, that wants to spin and try to put a veneer on a pretty corrupt core.

I question the minister: Why does the Ministry of Children and Youth Services 2010-11 briefing book say that the number of adoptions completed by children's aid societies in Ontario have flatlined since 2003 and then try to give us the impression that, somehow, there's this revolution, there's this explosion of adoptions taking place, when her own documents say that those adoptions have flatlined since 2003? There's something askew here. There's something that's not right, and people want to know the answers. We're only going to get that in committee, and that's why the opposition is going to force this bill into committee.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** It's a pleasure of mine to stand in this House today and support Bill 179, which amends the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance of young children and youth.

This legislation is the next step in our government's commitment to improve Ontario's adoption system. If



this bill should pass, it will help people build their families and help the children in the province's care find loving, permanent homes, where they can find a loving family that will provide them with all the supports they need. There is nothing more critical, nothing more fundamental to a child's well-being than knowing he or she will always have a place to call home and have a family that will support them as they face the daily challenges of their lives.

In 2006, our government introduced changes to increase the number of children growing up with families in permanent homes, including through adoption. Let me say to you that these changes made a positive difference in the adoption process, but we believe there is more to be done, and that's what Bill 179 does. I've heard from everyone who has spoken so far that it looks as though this bill has the general support of all parties within the Legislature.

Since then, fewer kids are coming into children's aid societies' care and more kids are getting the chance to succeed in a permanent home. We continue to work with adoption organizations and our community partners to strengthen Ontario's child protection system and help all Ontario children reach their full potential. It's a win-win situation for the adoptive parent, who waits to open their heart and home to a welcoming child, and for the child who needs a loving, stable, permanent home as they face the challenges of their daily life.

There are currently about 9,000 crown wards in the care of children's aid societies. These children and youth have moved from place to place and from school to school and from family to family over the years. It's not a very positive thing for a young person growing up. Over 80% of them have special needs of one kind or another. I believe this bill will help to solve that situation in some small way. These needs can vary from a learning or developmental disability to complex physical, behavioural or emotional disabilities, and in many cases they have not received the appropriate supports and care to deal with their conditions. And whether they live in a foster home or in a group home, they all have one thing in common: Their best chance of success is with a safe, stable and permanent family.

Research indicates that kids who are adopted or provided with the permanency of a long-term home have significantly better outcomes compared to those who remain in care. Adopted children are almost 25% more likely to complete high school and 50% more likely to continue school at the post-secondary level. Unfortunately, three out of every four kids in care have access orders that legally prevent them from being placed for adoption. An access order is a legal order that prescribes how much and what type of contact the child has with significant people in their lives, including their birth family and, as some have mentioned, their grandparents.

Access orders have prevented young people from being adopted in Ontario for more than 30 years. This bill significantly changes that and will certainly make a difference for some of these young people. This legis-

lation will hopefully help some of these young children find a home, have a better chance, have more opportunities in life, and I think the bill brings hope.

Our government must make it easier to bring these children and the waiting parents together. These young people deserve a place to call home. They deserve to be cared for and loved by parents who want to open their homes and hearts to these young people. They deserve the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential in life and be contributing members of our society.

The new legislation, if passed, will mean an access order will terminate automatically when a child is placed for adoption. In cases where it would be in a child's best interest to maintain some contact with their birth family or another person after adoption, and the child consents—if he or she consents to the order—the court would make that openness order available. Proposed legislation will also reinforce the children's aid society's plan for the adoption of a crown ward even when an access order is in effect.

These changes will make a difference for many kids who want "forever families," who want to come home to a hug from their parents, and they will make a difference to those people who want nothing more than to open up their homes and their hearts to these young people, to read a book to a child or tuck them in late at night with a hug and a kiss.

And the changes do not stop there. We've heard from adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents on what they need to make it easier to adopt a child in Ontario. As a result, we're doubling the number of adoption resource exchange conferences held annually across the province from two to four. These conferences help match prospective adoptive families with children waiting to be adopted.

Adoptive and prospective adoptive parents also told us that finding reliable information, no matter what adoption stream they're interested in—public, private or international—is a challenge to them currently. With that in mind, we will be providing easy-to-navigate, online information so prospective adoptive parents can determine which adoption option is right for them.

Our government has heard from children's aid societies that about 1,500 families are waiting for a home study to be completed. A home study is an assessment process between the prospective adoptive parents and a qualified adoption practitioner, usually a social worker. It determines whether parents are prepared and suitable to adopt.

A backlog of 1,500 families is unacceptable to our government. We will work with the children's aid societies to help this number come down and ensure that home studies are done without delay. We are committed to tackling that backlog and establishing standard timelines for home studies in the public system.

For aboriginal children, the Child and Family Services Act recognizes customary care as a way for children to find permanent homes. Customary care is the care and



supervision of an aboriginal child by a person who is not the child's parent, according to the customs of the child's band or native community. Each community defines its own traditions. We will work with the children's aid societies and First Nations to increase the use of these arrangements so that more aboriginal children and youth are able to stay connected to their communities, their cultures and their traditions.

We are also planning to build on the innovative steps being taken by CASs that are providing subsidies to make it possible for some families to adopt. To do this, we will seek their advice and that of other experts and consider how we can best build on their experiences across the province.

Our government began strengthening adoption in 2006. We are proud of the progress we have made to this date. We've heard from partners that the progress we're making is good and it's relevant. Partners, such as the Adoption Council of Ontario, are encouraged by these changes.

1750

Last week, Minister Broten introduced the legislation. The executive director of the Adoption Council of Ontario had this to say: "The leadership, reform and supports proposed will greatly assist the adoption community—professionals and adoptive families—in finding permanent homes for more children. We have a lot of work to do, and today we are affirmed that the government is part of the team—we will accomplish so much more when we work together."

Indeed, through working together, government, community partners and families can improve the lives of these children and groups across our province and find permanent homes for kids in care.

We've heard from young people who were once crown wards and have now been adopted. They have spoken to us from the heart. They have thanked us for these initiatives. They have told us that every kid in Ontario deserves a family, especially those kids who have been through what they've been through in their past life. They've told us that nothing compares to the love and support that a permanent family can provide and that loving family that they can come home to on a daily basis.

We are grateful for the hard work of children's aid societies to make successful adoptions like these possible. Last year alone, we increased adoptions in the public system by 21% over the year before, and we are working to increase that number through this legislation. We all feel confident that this legislation will bring about that increase that we expect.

The act, if passed, is another step in the right direction. It is what the public wants us to do. It is what the children want us to do. It is what our children's aid services are asking us to do.

We've taken important steps for children in care, but we've also taken important steps for all Ontario children. Through the Ontario child benefit, we're providing financial support for low-income families to provide for

their children. Through our full-day kindergarten program, we're offering a solid foundation for future learning. Through Healthy Smiles Ontario, we're helping kids get regular dental checkups. Through the funding of more children's vaccines and the testing of infants for more diseases, we are now a leader in Canada and the world for children's health. Through important investments in special education and children's mental health, we're giving our kids the extra support they need to be successful. We are giving them that opportunity that they've been dependent upon us to do and provide to them.

Helping children, youth and families get what they need to succeed is a priority for our government. Our government will continue to work diligently with our partners in the adoption community.

We thank the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption for providing important advice about improving adoption services, and we thank all the community partners and organizations who shared their experiences and advice to help make our adoption system better. Together, we can help young people in the care of children's aid societies and prospective adoptive parents build the lives they always dreamed of.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage all families and individuals in Ontario to think about the special children across our province waiting to be adopted and to ask themselves if they have a place in their hearts and in their lives to give a child a forever family.

While we want to find a forever family for every child in care, unfortunately, the reality is that this is not always possible. There are some kids for whom adoption is not in their future. They will grow up in the care of the province, living in foster homes or residential homes. Many leave care after they turn 16, not realizing how difficult it will be to manage on their own. These kids are our collective responsibility. They need our help to fulfill their potential. We need them to perform at their best.

These changes will allow youth to get the supports they need to fulfill their potential and move into adulthood and be contributing members of our province and our society. We know from Statistics Canada that almost half of Canadians in their twenties live at home and enjoy all the supports of a loving family. But right now, there is a youth who leaves the care of the CAS at age 16 or 17 and is not allowed to come back for the support he or she needs and wants.

When youths leave the care of children's aid societies before age 18, they cannot continue receiving the supports they had in care, including financial support, the support of a dedicated social worker and the social and emotional support of a foster or group home. In fact, youth formerly in the care of CASs are up to three times more likely to be unemployed or drop out of school. This makes them at risk of falling through the cracks. That is not how parents should care for their children, and that is not how crown wards should be cared for, either.

If this bill passes, these changes will allow youth whose care arrangements ended at age 16 or 17 to return



to their CAS to receive both financial and non-financial supports until they turn 21. By extending this support, we expect these young people to stay in school longer and become successful adults. We're also making it easier for a youth receiving financial support from a CAS to go to college or university.

Together, we can help young people in the care of children's aid societies and prospective adoptive parents build the lives they always dreamed of.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage all members of this Legislature to give their full support to this particular piece of legislation.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*



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*Continued from back cover*

## **Organ donation**

Mr. Frank Klees .....	5641
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5642

## **Visitors**

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5642
--------------------------------------	------

## **DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS**

### **Time allocation**

Motion agreed to .....	5642
------------------------	------

## **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5642
-----------------------	------

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Federal election**

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5642
--------------------------	------

### **Federal election**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5643
-----------------------	------

### **Pope John Paul II**

Mr. Mario Sergio.....	5643
-----------------------	------

### **Landlords**

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5643
---------------------------	------

### **Gerry Rosenquist**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5643
------------------------	------

### **Huck Finn Youth Fishing Day**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5644
-----------------------	------

### **Armenian genocide**

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5644
------------------------	------

### **Assistance to farmers**

Mr. Dave Levac.....	5644
---------------------	------

### **Patrick Chan**

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5644
---------------------------	------

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment**

Act, 2011, Bill 188, Mr. Chan / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien, projet de loi 188, M. Chan	
First reading agreed to.....	5645

### **Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 189, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu, projet de loi 189, M. Dickson**

First reading agreed to.....	5645
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5645

## **STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

### **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**

Hon. Michael Chan .....	5645
-------------------------	------

### **Government services**

Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	5646
----------------------------	------

### **Government services**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5647
-------------------------	------

### **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5647
----------------------	------

### **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5647
-----------------------	------

### **Government services**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5648
-----------------------	------

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5648
-----------------------------	------

Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	5648
-------------------------	------

Mr. Steve Clark .....	5649
-----------------------	------

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5649
-----------------------	------

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Waste disposal**

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	5650
----------------------------	------

### **Highway improvement**

Mr. Norm Miller.....	5650
----------------------	------

### **Diagnostic services**

Mme France Gélinas .....	5650
--------------------------	------

### **Multiple sclerosis treatment**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5651
------------------------	------

### **Dog ownership**

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	5651
-----------------------------	------

### **Replacement workers**

Mme France Gélinas .....	5651
--------------------------	------

### **Photo identification**

Mr. Bob Delaney.....	5651
----------------------	------

### **Environmental protection**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5652
-----------------------	------



<b>Office of the Ombudsman</b>	
Mme France G��linas.....	5652
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Bruce Crozier.....	5652
<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5652
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5653
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5653

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011, Bill 179, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 favorisant la fondation de familles et la r��ussite chez les jeunes, projet de loi 179, Mme Broten</b>	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5653
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5656
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5656
Mr. Pat Hoy .....	5656
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	5656
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5657
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5657
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5660
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5660
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	5660
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5661
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5661
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5661
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5664
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5664
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5665
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	5665
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5665
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	5665
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5668

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 3 May 2011 / Mardi 3 mai 2011

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Time allocation</b>	
Vote deferred.....	5621
<b>Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa</b>	
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5621
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5623
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5625
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5626
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5626
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5626
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5626
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5627
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5630
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5630
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5630
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5631
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5631
<b>Wearing of buttons</b>	
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5631

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5631
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5631
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	5631
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	5631
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5631
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5631
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5631
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5631
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5631

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5631
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5632
<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5632
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5632

<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5633
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5633
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5634
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5634
<b>Energy policies</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5635
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5635
<b>Labour unions</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5635
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5635
<b>Police services</b>	
Mr. Michael A. Brown .....	5636
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5636
<b>Energy policies</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5636
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5637
<b>Nuclear energy</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5637
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5637
<b>Youth employment</b>	
Mr. David Zimmer .....	5637
Hon. Sandra Pupatello .....	5638
<b>Discrimination</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5638
Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	5638
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5639
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5639
<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mr. Rick Johnson .....	5639
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5639
<b>Community safety</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5640
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	5640
<b>Northern health services</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5640
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5640
<b>Endangered species</b>	
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5641
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	5641

*Continued on inside back cover*





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# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)



Wednesday 4 May 2011

Mercredi 4 mai 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 May 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Baha'i prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUILDING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING YOUTH TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT LA FONDATION DE FAMILLES ET LA RÉUSSITE CHEZ LES JEUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance / *Projet de loi 179, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne l'adoption et les soins et l'entretien.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Good morning. It's a pleasure to continue where I stopped off yesterday. I know I have a couple of minutes left to speak on Bill 179, which is An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Throughout the debate yesterday, all members who spoke were in favour of this particular piece of legislation. Obviously, this is something that is needed, and needed as soon as possible so we can help the most children and young people who are in care currently in our system.

I have to say to you also that many of us need to just look back at the track record of this government and the things we're doing for young people. This is just one more step in the right direction to make sure we give children and young people that good start, that early start, that worthwhile start in life so that they can be contributing members of our society, that opportunity that they have long been waiting for.

If you look at the youth-at-risk strategy that we implemented, if you look at the poverty plan that we looked at, it's all about children. If you look at the children's mental health strategy and monies that have been put in the budget for young people, it's all about giving the young people in our community and in our province that early

start to give them a chance to be successful in life. Again, I would say that we're doing the right thing.

I just want to use one quote that I know my colleague used yesterday. It's to remind us that the "OACAS applauds Minister Broten and the McGuinty government for this comprehensive and thoughtful announcement. These changes, taken collectively, are important steps in making 'family' a reality for many, many children and youth in CAS care. We look forward to working with the government on the details of the proposals and putting Ontario on the map as a leader in supporting children and families." That is from Mary Ballantyne, the executive director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. That speaks volumes for the direction the government is taking. This is one that this particular organization has long requested. Obviously they support us, and we'll be working with them as we move forward.

I will end by saying again that I hope this House moves this particular piece of legislation quickly through and that it's implemented before we end this particular session and go to the polls.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Scarborough—Rouge River. I'm sorry I missed some of his remarks yesterday, but I did participate in this debate.

We all agree about putting children first. I think that's what is so harmonious about Bill 179. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has told us categorically that we're supportive of it, that we need to go to committee and that we need to get on with it today. I expect the House leader, who is here this morning, will probably call her peers from the NDP as well as the Conservatives and advise us that this is going to committee next week. This is what should happen. We could get this done.

Now, if that does not happen—and not to be cynical. We need to move forward right away with this. This is about vulnerable children, especially the crown wards. This bill provides an opportunity for up to 800 or 1,000 young people today who are in custody, if you will, under the control of the children's aid society or other networks, to have a family. It's in that sentiment, in that mood of reflection, that we are putting children first. We want to move forward and go to committee and make sure that we address some of the issues that have been brought up during the debates here: the issue on First Nations, about repatriation, about support for adoptive families when needed, especially in the case that was

mentioned of grandparents adopting. There could be the death of a mother or father or some other tragic event of some sort where there could be some allowances—that is, funding—that could be forwarded to help that family adopt one of their own flesh and blood.

It's the right thing to do. We are encouraging the ministry to move forward as soon as possible, have some hearings on it and get this back to the Legislature before we adjourn in the next three or four weeks. We can get it done. Put children first.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I was here yesterday afternoon when the member for Scarborough—Rouge River began his comments, and I was here this morning as he wrapped them up. He's right; there is all-party support for this proposition. There are concerns, and you've heard them articulated once again by the member from Durham, who repeated some of the comments he made during his participation in the debate here yesterday, and certainly by me and certainly by our member for Kenora—Rainy River, who will be pleased to be speaking to this bill this morning.

The concern is about the adequacy of support for family and children's services, for children's aid societies. We know that presently, on an annual basis, opposition members have to stand up in the chamber and advocate for their local family and children's services, their children's aid societies, appealing to the government to please fund these people because they're midway through the year and they're on the verge of bankruptcy; they're at risk, literally, of shutting down their doors. So here we give them more responsibilities—not inappropriately—but with no suggestion of any adequate funding that they can count on.

Of course, I also raised yesterday, when I spoke to this Bill 179, the private member's bill that's being put forward on Thursday by Mr. Marchese, the member for Trinity—Spadina—Thursday afternoon, private members' public business—which will amend the Ombudsman Act to expand the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. The government House leader, I'm sure, is very enthusiastic about seeing Mr. Marin's Ombudsman jurisdiction expanded to include oversight over children's aid societies. What an effective way of monitoring adequacy of funding.

0910

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I was pleased to listen, yesterday afternoon and again this morning, to the comments from my colleague the member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I know, from a personal perspective, that the member from Scarborough—Rouge River was always very concerned about putting children first. I know his background: Certainly, prior to his arrival here, the member from Scarborough—Rouge River was one of the best-known soccer coaches in the Scarborough area, and he spent a considerable amount of time over the years working with our youngest citizens in the Scarborough area, teaching them skills and working with them.

His speech, both yesterday and today, I think reflects the great interest that he has in children and in bringing about amendments to this particular piece of legislation, dealing with the 9,000 crown wards we have in the province of Ontario, the ability to change this legislation to facilitate the adoption of individuals who find themselves as crown wards in the province of Ontario and the opportunity to place these individuals with strong families in the province of Ontario. We do know that, for a wide variety of reasons, there are some families that just can't have children on their own, and this is a real opportunity to address this issue, which has been sitting around for many, many years.

It is true that there is a consensus that is building in this House on this particular bill, Bill 179. We're hoping that it can get to committee rather quickly to hear presentations on areas of the bill that need to be improved—and then get this bill back to the House as quickly as possible for third reading and royal assent to improve the lives of children in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to comment on the remarks of the member for Scarborough—Rouge River because this is a pressing problem that we all agree upon. I think we're all agreed upon the remedy and would like to see this bill go to committee to be passed before the end of this sitting.

There were approximately 9,400 crown wards in 2008—9,400. Of those, only 822 were adopted in 2007–08. These children, in effect, do not have a home. They are made crown wards for their own protection as our society deems necessary, and unfortunately, they do not have a permanent home, which is necessary for any child who wants to be a member of our society. I think I can speak for all members: We are all concerned with the lack of action in regard to the small number of adoptions. Hopefully, this bill will help.

One of the problems, however, is that our children's services are totally underfunded. There's even talk of some children's aid societies in Ontario going bankrupt, being put in bankruptcy by their boards of directors because of the lack of funding. How this government expects, with that lack of funding, adoptions to increase is beyond me. I don't understand the logic, and I think the real concern is the lack of funding in our children's aid.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Scarborough—Rouge River, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to thank the member from Welland—did I get it right?—the member from Durham and my colleague from Peterborough.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Just call him Jeff.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Well, he's one of my better colleagues. He's a guy that I look up to, and it's interesting that he's followed my career in politics all these years. On top of that, he knows some of my extracurricular involvements. But Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go there too much.



This is a bill that is long awaited by our agencies that work with crown wards. There are also a lot of families out there that are willing to adopt these young people into their families, give them a home; give them the support, the care and the love they deserve; and give them a new start in life. This bill makes a big difference in that particular sector.

Also, some kids that have been in care have left care for whatever reason, got out onto our streets, and then realized that the world out there is not very friendly and that it's not very easy to survive in our streets. This gives them a chance to actually go back to children's aid services and receive the help and support and all the things they need to lead what I would call a full life and a life they would be very proud of themselves. This particular bill allows us to do that.

We should move forward with it as rapidly and as quickly as we can. I know the minister is excited about getting the job done quickly. I have to say, it's a step this government is taking in the right direction, and we should do it quickly.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I am so pleased to be speaking to this bill today, because what is more important in our society than trying to assist, to nurture, to mentor and to embrace children—our own children, children in our communities, but most especially the most vulnerable children? Those are the children we are talking about in this bill today, Bill 179, the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011.

This bill, if we pass it, deals with two issues: It deals with access orders to make it easier to adopt children who are currently crown wards, and it makes it easier for children between the ages of 15 and 16 who have left the care of the CAS and are returning to CAS care.

Under this new legislation, when a child is placed for adoption, all access orders will be terminated—such an important piece in this legislation.

Like I say, what more important job do we as adults have in life than to nurture, to mentor, to care for and to advance our children to the point where they are confident, well-rounded, productive human beings? And what better way to do it than to give children who don't have a family, access to a family and everything that a family brings: the joy of belonging, and the ability to share in activities, in celebrations and in parents and families attending sports games and advising and mentoring kids through their school years? I think that what this bill will do is create the ability for that to happen that much more for kids who don't have that today.

There are some 1,500 potential adoptive families in Ontario—1,500—and I think it behooves us as a government to recognize this and move forward to create many opportunities for these families to become adoptive parents. The ministry has to deal with the wait-list for a home study before any adoption process can move forward, and this places additional burdens on the CASs. CASs have had a history, in the last little while, of having

great difficulties balancing their budgets. It's been almost impossible for CASs, without exception, to respond to the kind of lack of funding that they receive.

For an adoption process to move forward and for a CAS to have the ability to move this forward, I think that the part this bill is silent on is important and something we should have a real look at as we go through the committee process, and that is, how do we fund all CASs on an equal, level playing field in order for them to be able to move forward with the adoption process and do the home studies? Right now, what the CASs have done is abandon doing home studies because they just don't have the money. The ministry has not provided that money, and that needs to start happening.

**0920**

We support this bill, because it's about taking children who are currently crown wards and not eligible for adoption and allowing many more of them to be adopted into warm and loving families. It can't be more positive than that; there are a lot of families that are waiting to adopt these kids. But most importantly, it provides a chance for them to have this family experience. It provides a chance for them to have all the benefits that go along with that, and it brings that positive change in their lives that gives them a better foundation to move forward and create a positive life for themselves and an opportunity to succeed in life. How much better could it be than for that to happen?

Things have changed. Currently there are far too many children who don't have the ability to be adopted, who don't have access to adoption, and there are far too many families who want to be adoptive parents who are not able to go through that adoption process. I think that what this bill does is begin to open the door for that to happen.

There's one part of this bill that concerns me, though, and it is that currently—I was talking about the financial situation of CASs—the CASs provide some subsidy to families who adopt crown wards. It's at their discretion. There's nothing mandated for them to do that, but it is the right thing to do. I know that the minister has said she would like there to be a consistent adoption subsidy, but in this bill there's no mention of that happening. She says she will be seeking the advice of experts, but for me that again is a further delay in that process. It creates unpredictability for the prospective adoptive parents, but mostly for the CASs, who are actually left holding the bag, because they have to find a means to try to assist these prospective adoptive parents with some kind of subsidy.

CASs are broke. Let's face it: That's the only word we can use. They're broke, and they are providing one of the most important tasks we have in our province; that is, to take broken families and broken children and try to piece things back together again. What more important job in life is there than to create some stability for a child? But they're broke. They need some predictability. They need some assurance from this government that they will have the dollars to cover this, but this legislation makes no mention of that. I'm hoping that through the committee



process, through the hearings, we're going to be able to create the kind of awareness that will allow us to put forward amendments that the government will accept and we can make a change to that part of the legislation.

There's another part of the legislation that is of some concern to me, and that is that there is no mention of special-needs children. Special-needs children cannot be forgotten in this opportunity. This legislation cannot be an opportunity lost for special-needs children. These children have the absolute least likelihood of being adopted, because they have special needs. It takes extra care. It takes a really special family to be able to embrace a special-needs child. It takes a lot more money. So again, I think it would behoove this government to look after those social and medical needs with regard to special-needs children and mention them specifically in this piece of legislation. We can't forget them. We can't leave this opportunity behind without including special-needs children.

Currently, if a special-needs child is a crown ward, they have access to programs and medical supports. But guess what? Once the child is adopted, the family has to assume all responsibility for those needs. Is it fair that a family has to consider their financial position to the point where a special-needs child gets left behind, even though there was a chance that child could have been embraced by a family?

I really think it's important that we raise this issue at the hearings, that we have more discussion about this and that, again, the government accept some amendments with respect to special-needs children.

Let's go back to the access order. An access order is to be terminated: Currently, when an access order is to be terminated, a notification in writing is made to the holder of that access order. It's done so in a very legal, very technical, very logical way. It is now the responsibility of the children's aid society to use every means possible to contact the holder of the access order. I have no question with that; that's a good thing to happen because there need to be safeguards in everything that happens when we're looking after children. The judge, then, must determine that all reasonable steps were taken to notify the access holder. This, again, is the burden of the children's aid society.

I go back to my point: The children's aid societies are stretched to their limit. They're stretched to their limit, and they deal with some very serious, sombre issues on a daily basis. They deal with broken families, they deal with disturbed children, they deal with all kinds of issues we don't even want to think about, on a daily basis. To continue to add this extra burden, I think, is unconscionable, and I think that we have to start looking at some ways to either resource CASs more fully or to take some of that burden away by reviewing the structure of how some of these things happen.

These kids deserve it. Our society is better for it. We're creating, I think, a better community by being compassionate, by being understanding of these special issues.

Crown wards, at this point in time, who are looking for a family; families who are looking to adopt: It seems

like a match made in heaven. We ought to do everything—turn every stone, create every opportunity, cut as much red tape as possible—to make this happen. For all of the children who are looking for adoption, for all the families that are looking to be loving adoptive families, we have an opportunity here. I hope that we don't miss that opportunity, because, in some bills that I've seen come through this House in the last four years, we've missed some really big opportunities to do really good things. For whatever reason, the opportunities have been missed. This is not one that we should do that with.

I look forward to the hearings, and I look forward to being part of moving legislation forward that makes such a positive change in our province for children, for families and for the future of this province.

0930

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened to my colleague from the Conservative Party, and I want to thank her for raising what I think are the real issues in the context of this bill. The fact of the matter is, you can pass all kinds of high-sounding legislation, but if the children's aid societies do not have the resources and the staffing to do the work, not much is going to happen. So far we haven't seen anything that indicates that's going to change, so I want to thank her for wrestling with what I believe is the real issue: If we want to see more adoptions, then there has to be some resourcing of children's aid societies so that they can do the work which allows adoption to proceed and happen. If they don't have the resources to do that, then this government can pass six or seven pieces of legislation and not much is going to happen. I think that's what we'll need to get into in committee: to look at the nuts and bolts of what needs to happen but which so far isn't happening at all.

New Democrats want to see this legislation go to committee, we want to see this legislation dealt with at committee and we want to see the real issues wrestled with. Is this government going to provide the resources that children's aid societies need, or not? If we don't see the resources, then we can pass this legislation and six other pieces of legislation like it and not much is going to happen.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, it's true. We can always do more, but I think we have to deal with the reality of the situation, and it's my understanding that if you put all the budgetary items together, we spend more than \$1.5 billion per year on child welfare services in this province.

In my earlier career as a lawyer in Kingston, back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I worked quite a bit with the children's aid society and with the various children who were under their protection. I can tell you that the issue of crown wards is probably one of the saddest situations to be involved in at times, particularly when these children basically—it used to be that at age 16 or 18 they were cut loose from the system, because they were no longer part of the system.



This initiative here is an excellent initiative that deserves the support of all members in the House. It's a good initiative on a number of different counts. There are crown wards who families in the province want to adopt. This kind of legislation, the initiatives that are contained therein, will allow this to happen. Also, when a child is a crown ward and perhaps needs extra help beyond the age of 16 and 18, they will be able to get it up until they're 21 once the legislation is implemented, with these various rules and regulations.

This is a good piece of legislation. I noted that the members across the House will support it. Yes, I agree that we always need more resources, particularly to look after the most vulnerable in our society, which includes children who are crown wards, but I think we also have to deal with the reality of the situation: Right now in the province we are already spending something like \$1.5 billion per year to make sure that the children of this province get the best kind of services and the best kind of support that they could possibly have.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I thank the member from Burlington for her sensitive tone, which was very evident in her remarks: non-political, non-accusatory, positive. These are the right kinds of tones that need to be used in this particular debate. We're actually supportive of this legislation. We, along with the NDP, recognize that there are some changes required—whether it's dealing with First Nations, native peoples and others—and that there are specific challenges that need to be addressed, and I think she covered it with the right tone.

There are a couple of things I'd just put on the record that need to be said. Her response to the CAS is true. It's true in Durham; it's probably true across the province. I'm surprised that the Minister of Government Services—whichever ministry he has now. "The former Minister of the Environment" is how I like to think of him.

I got thrown off the boat, but anyway, the reason it's really important to recognize here that the cost to families—and there are transitional funds available through the CAS that need to be taken advantage of. But if you look at a family—I'm looking at the expert panel's report—adoptive families told us that the cost of private adoption ranged from \$20,000 to \$30,000, with inter-country adoptions costing up to \$60,000 and more. Yet we know that a ward in care is about \$32,000 a year. Some of that money, rather than being spent on the bureaucracy of the CASs—we should change the approach and allow these crown wards and others, under the appropriate conditions, to be adopted, and provide support for these adoptive families.

One of the other options is the in-vitro fertilization option for families that want children.

This change could allow some of this to happen, and this is what's reflected in the expert panel's report. So I commend the ministry to move forward. Stop ragging the puck on this issue. Get it to committee. Bring it back before the election is called.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** As I've had a chance to say previously in this House, we are anxious to get this bill to committee. We are committed to seeing this legislative process move quickly so that this bill can be passed. On the day of introduction of the bill, I talked about the importance and the urgency of seeing this legislation passed, because so many thousands of kids are dependent upon these changes being made so that they can have a better future.

I want to thank the member for Burlington. I appreciate the tone that she took in her remarks, and I appreciate very much the support that we are receiving from all sides of the House.

But I do want to comment on the fact that we need to acknowledge that we are well under way with working hard to find a pathway to sustainability for the whole child welfare sector and to focus more on outcomes for kids. "Outcomes for kids" means permanent families, whether that family is a family of customary care, whether that is the prevention of an admission so that they stay with their own family, or whether, in the case that we're talking about on the floor of the Legislature today, it's about making the pathway to adoption more available.

We have seen increased investments, and we are putting CASs on a stable footing. In fact, 72% of CASs are receiving more funding this year than last year. We're also targeting that funding to make sure that we spend our time in a children's aid society doing the work that is best for kids, making sure that we take a look at, with the advice of our expert panel, paperwork burdens that might be in place.

All of our attention and focus, as it is on the floor of the Legislature today, always must be what is best for Ontario's kids, how we can work together to make sure that those kids who are our collective responsibility—they are Ontario's kids when they are crown wards—that we give them everything we can to make sure that they find their forever family.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Burlington, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** As I said, the PCs will be supporting this bill. How could we not? It does move forward, and it does do some good things for children who are in need. I want to thank the member from Kenora—Rainy River, the Minister of Consumer Services, the member from Durham and the Minister of Children and Youth Services for their comments.

When I first began my political career in 1982, one of the first tasks I was assigned was to be a director on the board of the children's aid society in Halton. I know the member from Oakville has also served on that board and is very familiar with the kinds of issues that children's aid societies faced back then. I think those issues have only escalated today.

I know that more money has been put in the pot for these kinds of things, but the problem isn't fixed yet.



Children's aid societies still go through the excruciating pain of trying to determine whether they can take on more families or not.

I can remember how many times the province insisted that we go through exceptional-circumstance reviews and the kinds of human resources and money it took to do that, and took away from looking after children. So I think that the whole process needs to be reviewed and understood better so that the money that we spend at CASs is the money that goes right to the front line, to the families and to the children who need it. That's part of what I was trying to say.

0940

This is one of those issues where you just park your politics at the door. This has nothing to do with politics; this has to do with—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to say a few words about this bill, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Let me indicate at the outset that New Democrats are going to support the legislation. I call this legislation feel-good legislation, and we've seen a lot of that from the McGuinty Liberals over the last few months: legislation that perhaps has a nice title or subtitle and is designed to make people feel good, but by itself probably will not accomplish much. So while we're going to support the legislation, I want to spend the time that I have here today dealing with the real issues.

One of the first real issues is this government's continuing lack of understanding—or, should I say, lack of caring—about what First Nations think, and I want to deal with that in the context of this bill. When the bill was introduced, I called a number of the child and family service organizations in my part of the province that work with First Nation communities. First Nations have a real interest, both today and historically, in the issue of adoption, because in the sad history of Ontario, what happened all too often was that child and family service organizations would go into First Nations, would take children from their families and would place them for adoption with non-native folks, with white folks, who happened to live in cities and towns elsewhere. Native kids were adopted into families in the United States or adopted far away from their community, from their culture, from their families, from their brothers and sisters, from their extended family. I think when we reflect on that now, we'd say that that kind of behaviour was verging on criminal behaviour. It was certainly quite inhumane. So First Nations have a real interest in this. They want to know that if children are going to be placed for adoption, that sorry history is not going to be repeated again.

When the government introduced the legislation, I called three or four of the First Nation child and family service organizations and I said to them, "Has the government come and actually consulted with you about this

legislation and about the issues?" And you know what? They said, "What are you talking about? We don't know anything about this. No one's come and consulted with us. No one's talked to us." I called some chiefs and some of the tribal organizations and I said, "Has anybody from the government come and talked to you about this?" And you know what the answer was? They didn't know what I was talking about either. They hadn't heard a thing about it.

Members of the government may think that this is not an important issue. Let me tell you, Speaker: This is repetitive behaviour for this government. Only a few months ago, we saw the government crowing about the Far North Act, and we had the galleries full of First Nation chiefs and elders and tribal organizations saying, "This has a direct and enduring impact on our lives, our communities, our livelihoods, our future and our lands." And do you know what? This government didn't even bother to talk to the First Nations, who are the only people who live in the Far North.

Insult was added to it, because the Minister of Natural Resources flew in to about six communities over the summer, held a 15-minute photo op, then tried to say, "Well, that's consultation with First Nations." Not only was it dishonest; it was insulting. Imagine when First Nations leadership, elders, tribal organizations and First Nation child and family service organizations see the same thing happening again.

I understand that the government's response is, "Oh, there was a conference in Thunder Bay, and the legislation was mentioned." Holding a conference in Thunder Bay and taking two sentences out of a paragraph of a speech to mention the legislation is not consultation. It's not consultation, it's not respectful and, once again, it's insulting.

This is one of the reasons this bill has to go to committee, because I think First Nations deserve to have the opportunity to look at the bill, to examine the bill, debate the bill, discuss the bill, critique the bill and, if they feel it necessary, oppose the bill. Hopefully, the public hearings will be located such that First Nations will actually be able to do this. We don't want another repetition of the Far North Act, or recently with the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, who holds a forest tenure reform that's going to affect lives all across northern Ontario and refuses to hold public hearings in northern Ontario. We don't want another repetition of that.

There need to be public hearings, and the public hearings, in my view, need to travel outside of this building. They need to go to places like Sioux Lookout; the public hearings, I think, need to go to places like Moosonee, so the people who may be very seriously affected by this legislation actually have an opportunity to think about it, talk about it, debate it and, if they feel so inclined, to oppose the bill or oppose parts of the bill or insist on amendments to the bill.

The second issue which I think, again, needs some work at committee—and the minister tries to provide some sugar-coating with this issue, but the fact of the



matter is, the majority of children's aid societies in this province are being pushed over the cliff. The demands for their time and their resources far exceed their resources. The fact of the matter is, we have probably more families in Ontario under economic pressure, financial pressure and housing pressure than ever before. We have more families in need, we have more families that are struggling, we have more families that are being challenged—all of which means a lot more work for children's aid societies. When you talk with the executive directors, when you talk with people who serve on the volunteer boards of the societies, when you talk with the social workers, they all will tell you the same reality: The demands on their time are greater than ever and the resources are simply not there.

So the natural question is: If children's aid societies are already being pushed over the cliff by services they must provide—they don't have any choice; they are legally required. The law of Ontario says to them, "Thou shalt do this. Thou shalt provide this service. Thou shalt deal with these issues as a priority"—if children's aid societies are already pushed over the edge of the cliff by the mandated services they must provide, then how do they find the time to provide the support, the counselling and the ancillary services that go with adoption?

It's amazing. I've heard government speaker after government speaker get up, and none of them want to deal with this issue. None of them want to deal with this issue. They all repeat the spin words that this legislation somehow, magically, by the stroke of a pen is going to wonderfully, completely, totally improve the situation without dealing with the real issue, and the real issue is that children's aid societies simply don't have the resources right now to support adoption services.

0950

I've seen this trick before. I remember the wonderful period of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan government would pass all kinds of legislation in the United States but then never provide any funding, any resources or any framework for the implementation or the enforcement of the legislation. The result was that nothing happened. The press releases went out announcing this wonderful legislation. The press releases went out announcing that this was world-class, leading-edge; it was going to be the silver bullet which was going to solve and address these pressing problems. But nothing happened because there were never any resources devoted to implementation. There were never any resources devoted to operation. There were never any resources devoted to things like enforcement.

This needs to be addressed at committee. And I say to the government: You can pass this bill, and you can pass 10 other bills like it, and you can send out the press releases saying, "This is wonderful. This is fantastic. This is unbelievable. This is incredible. This is world-class. This is leading-edge." We all know that nothing's going to happen if you do not provide the resources for implementation, for operation and for enforcement of what's in the bill.

All we've heard so far—my God, if I had a dollar for every time we've heard this from the McGuinty government—is, "We're are going to discuss," or, "We're going to hold a panel to talk about how we implement this." In other words, no commitment; just another conversation, another promise to perhaps, maybe, somehow, possibly do something in the future. That's not going to do anything. In committee, this issue needs to be raised.

I can tell you that one group of people in this province who are going to be very interested to hear if there are going to be any resources will be the First Nations. It will be the First Nations because First Nations know all too well what happens if you do not provide the financial and other resources for the implementation and the operation of the legislation. What happens is what they've experienced in the sorry history of Ontario. Kids are placed for adoption who perhaps shouldn't be placed for adoption. Kids are placed for adoption in homes that perhaps they shouldn't be placed in. And you get some very sorry results.

The third issue which I think needs to be addressed is this: There was an expert panel on adoptions. That expert panel on adoptions gave the government a report. They gave us, as legislators, a report. I have to say that it was a very good report. There were a number of recommendations in it. If you looked at the discussion that was contained in the paper and then the recommendations, they all flowed more or less reasonably and logically. You could see how one issue buttressed or depended upon another.

Regrettably, what we have in legislation here is a very, very small sliver of what was recommended. What's missing are some of the things which would make this legislation effective. I just want to talk about one of them now. I'm not going to go into the long history, but the reality in Ontario today is, if you are a family and you have a child who has special needs—let's say your child has a developmental delay of some kind which requires counselling, requires some sort of special education services, or perhaps it's a physical or physiological issue which again requires special services—and you're a family of limited means—you're like a lot of families in Ontario, a modest- or middle-income family—the only way you can get services for your child now, the CASs will tell you, is that you have to place the child as a crown wardship. Those children in some cases are then placed in foster homes.

We have a lot of children in foster homes who are special-needs children. One of the things that happened—and I give the expert panel credit for this: They actually talked to foster parents who had been caring for some of these children for three, four and five years, and the foster parents said, "We would love to adopt this child." But the law in Ontario today is this: If they were to adopt the child, all of the funding that provides special services for that child, special services that that child needs, would be lost, would be taken away. So they say, "As much as we would like to adopt, as much as we love this child and we have treated this child as our own, as



much as we have spent the last three or four years investing ourselves emotionally in this child, we cannot adopt because it would be against the interest of this boy or girl to adopt them and see them lose the special services. We don't have the financial wherewithal in our budget to provide the services." The expert panel said that if you really want to promote adoption, this issue has to be dealt with. It has to be addressed.

Do we find anything in the legislation that commits the government to doing that? Do we find a whisper, a sliver, anything that commits this government to doing that? Regrettably, the answer is no. What we've heard again are vague promises that the government will perhaps put together a group to discuss it, to investigate it, to look at it, to consider it, but no commitment to do anything.

I say again: If the government is serious about actually doing something other than passing legislation which sounds nice, uses nice words, has nice press releases and has lots of nice rhetoric, the government has got to address some of these issues. That's why this legislation has to go to committee and that's why these kinds of questions have to be answered, yes or no.

For eight years we've heard from this government—I'll give you an example: the whole issue of poverty in Ontario. We've heard over and over again that the government's studying it, that the government's got a group working on a strategy, that the government is developing tactics and position papers. What's the reality? On almost all fronts, we have more people falling into poverty in Ontario, and we have more people falling into deeper poverty in Ontario than ever before. Housing is one of the principal issues, and we just saw a housing bill that's not going to build any new housing; not one cent's worth.

I think people in Ontario have seen enough and heard enough of this. This bill needs to go to committee so the real issues can be raised and we can get some real answers, not vague promises to possibly, perhaps, maybe do something five or 10 years in the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have just a few brief moments to comment on the comments made by the member opposite, and to talk a little bit about, if I can, specifically the issue of aboriginal child welfare.

I want to correct the member opposite: We weren't in Thunder Bay. We spent two days at Fort William First Nation, where we hosted the first-ever aboriginal child welfare summit. Myself, alongside my aboriginal adviser, John Beaucage—who, again, is a first in this province; the very first time we have someone whom we are working closely with on these very important issues.

I will be the first to say, and I've said it many times around the province, that the legacy of the residential school scoop, of children being taken from their families, is a legacy in this province that we cannot be proud of. We know that we continue to see struggles in communities across the province as a result of parents who were

parenting children when they had never been parented themselves. And that is something that we take to heart as we do work in the province with respect to customary care and finding that as the pathway to permanency for these children.

At the very introduction of this legislation I had an opportunity to talk about how, for some children in the province, adoption is the pathway to permanency. For aboriginal children, customary care—a model that recognizes the historical way they were cared for in their communities by someone who might be part of their community but not a blood relative—is a traditional form of model that is recognized within the Child and Family Services Act. And that is what we spent over two days talking about: how we can improve that model and how we can have better outcomes for aboriginal children and families. It's something that we need to continue to do work on, but I'm very proud of the steps that we've taken to date.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I do think the member from Kenora—Rainy River brings a very definite level of passion to this and consistent remarks over the last couple of days of debate on Bill 179, so I commend him for that. In fact, I think the minister recognizes, by responding in a positive way, that there were hearings in the north for the first time ever, which means you have made some impact in the overall recognition of this customary care model.

I've tried, without the same level of expertise as the member, to acknowledge that: that customary care has to deal with the cultural background and reference points in an individual child's life. Whether they're from a different country or a different culture, these things need to be important so that it's customized and the child is first.

When you look at even the most easily understood, the familial adoption—that would be a grandparent—there need to be transitional supports. The expert panel report says, "It costs at least \$32,000 a year to keep a crown ward in care. It costs significantly less to provide supports and subsidies to help adoptive families parent children." This is a key recommendation of the expert panel. This is what I think are the views held here.

Children's aid societies, for all their well-intended purposes, may not be the right model all the time, and there are provisions for these transitional support costs that are addressed in many of the reports and recommendations, such as in the First Nations customary care model as well as in the other family members that may adopt—and they may be from a cultural background. Whether the person is from a Muslim, a Hindu or other kind of non-traditional Christian background, these are important accommodations for the children to adopt. And I urge the minister to move forward with that sentiment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The member for Kenora—Rainy River certainly touched upon one of the most serious issues that we face in Ontario and indeed throughout Canada today:



our aboriginal children. In the two years of being the PA to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I toured about 50% of the First Nations communities throughout Ontario: Sandy Lake, Anishinabek, Sagamok, Sudbury, and in my own community of Peterborough, where I have two First Nations communities, Hiawatha and Curve Lake. We all know that our children prosper when they're put into stable, safe family relationships.

It's interesting: Back as early as 2000, the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society and the two First Nations communities in my community, Hiawatha and Curve Lake, entered into a new service arrangement that was based on the cultural heritage of those two communities. That has been a model that other areas have looked at across the province, one that recognizes the cultural heritage of our First Nations people, and recognizing that the outcome of residential schools—that, in fact, our First Nations communities lost four generations of parenting within their social structure. If the non-aboriginal community in Ontario had lost four generations of parenting, you can only imagine what kind of social upheaval that would have brought about in our family structure. That's something that, as this bill goes to committee, we need to look at.

I want to applaud the minister, because I looked at an article from the National Post called "Suffer the Children," and they acknowledge that "Laurel Broten is to be applauded for examining the problems faced by Ontario's native communities. Not many politicians are willing even to cast a glance at this issue." She is commended for taking that step.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I, too, would like to commend the member from Kenora-Rainy River for the comments he has made. He continues to make passionate comments about the plight of the First Nations people in his area, and the kinds of challenges, obstacles and barriers they face with government red tape. I commend him for continuing to present their issues passionately, logically and sensibly. I hope that this Legislature can, with this legislation, Bill 179, make some positive difference in how the adoptive parents and the children who are waiting to be adopted can be treated in these circumstances. The member makes some really good points. He has the experience, and has talked to us about them on many occasions. It would really be a step forward for us to listen to him about the experiences of his constituents.

Once again, I'm going to say that this is about parking your politics at the door. When an act goes forward, it's an opportunity to include as many things in it as possible that we can think of to make life better, to create a quality of life for people in Ontario that moves us forward. We are only as strong as the most vulnerable people in our communities. This act certainly shines light on those folks who need our help. It would behoove us to make those kinds of changes and get it right.

I look forward to the committee hearings, I look forward to making those changes, and I hope that the govern-

ment side will accept the amendments that are so critical to make life better in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Kenora-Rainy River, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank my colleagues in the government and the Conservative opposition for the comments.

In response, just let me say this. The minister refers to discussions about customary care. Customary care is very important. It's especially important in First Nations communities, and some of the native child and family service organizations have done truly excellent work on this front. Some of the other First Nations child and family service organizations want to follow that lead and further develop the model. But holding discussions about customary care is not consultation on the legislation.

That's what this government seems to miss all the time. Just as we saw with the Far North Act, the government thinks that if the Minister of Natural Resources flies into six northern First Nation communities and holds a 10-minute photo op, that's consultation. That is not, and it's dishonest to even pretend that it is, and it's insulting to pretend that it is.

That is one of the issues that need to be addressed at committee: Did this government consult with First Nations on this issue or not? I think what the record is going to show is that there was no consultation; otherwise, First Nations would not be saying to me, "We've never heard of this bill and we've never heard of what's in it."

They also say—and I continue to be struck by this. When I raise the issue of special-needs children who, under the current law, lose their special-needs services when they're adopted unless the adopting parents have the financial resources to pay for them, never a response from government members on this; just silence.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there have been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Mr. Speaker, we'd like the debate to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Notwithstanding that decision, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear green ribbons in recognition of Children's Mental Health Week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I would like to ask the Legislative Assembly to welcome one of my constituents in the west gallery: Jack Graves, a constituent from Tillsonburg, who is here with us here today and is becoming a regular visitor. Along with him today is his granddaughter Katie Kerckaert and her friend Alexandra Tramer. We'd like, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, to welcome our guests this morning.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I would like to introduce to the House Gloria Richards, who is in the Speaker's gallery and in fact works for yourself, Mr. Speaker. She is here today to keep an eye on her granddaughter Melanie Soltau, who is one of our pages, from the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm pleased to welcome Lisa Katzman, the mother of page Benjamin Katzman.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to introduce to the Legislature Barb Santini, who is the mother of page Rachel Santini from the great riding of York South–Weston.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would like to introduce and welcome Maria and Mara Gagliu from the riding of Don Valley West. Maria practises dentistry in Thorncliffe Park, and Mara is a student at Northlea school, and she's heading off to the TOPPS program next year, which is a great honour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to introduce Gail Yattavong. She is the mother of Jasmyn Yattavong, who is our page from the great riding of Brampton–Springdale.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to introduce Stefanie Palmer from Guelph. She is here to visit with her daughter Kyla Fishburn, who is one of our wonderful pages and who will be having her 13th birthday tomorrow. Happy birthday, Kyla, and welcome, Stefanie.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to question period today a delegation from Dubreuilville in the Algoma–Manitoulin riding: Dave Jennings, the general manager for the mill there, as well as Mayor Louise Perrier and CAO Réjean Raymond.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to introduce my good friend Kevin Aitcheson, who is with the Stratford Fire Department.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Michael and Heather Haines from Cobourg, in the riding of Northumberland–Quinte West. Welcome.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to introduce the class of All Saints Catholic school in Whitby, which is actually the riding adjacent to mine, but their teacher, Chris Moriah, is an Ajax boy and is here with them today, and they'll be here momentarily.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of page Andrew Lamb and the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, to welcome his mother, Janet Purcell, and his father, Doug Lamb, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I too would like to welcome the keeper of the Speaker's apartment, Gloria Richards, as she is here in the Speaker's gallery. It's great to have you here, Gloria.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** With that applause, you might want to run for election and get elected Speaker. You've got support on both sides of the House.

We have with us today, seated in the Speaker's gallery, a group of interns from the National Assembly of Quebec, who are visiting the Ontario Legislature. They are Guillaume Tremblay-Boily, Alex Perreault, Loïc Blancquaert, Évelyne Beaudin and Dominic Migneault. Welcome to Queen's Park. We hope you enjoy your visit to Ontario.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to ask the pages to assemble for introduction, please.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Amira Abdalla, York Centre; Kyla Fishburn, Guelph; Erica Geen, Simcoe North; Christian Gill, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock; Jonathan Hampton, Kenora–Rainy River; Lukian Husak, Hamilton Centre; Caleb Jones, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound; Benjamin Katzman, Windsor–Tecumseh; Andrew Lamb, Eglinton–Lawrence; Hamza Naim, Ajax–Pickering; Allison Rudback, Whitby–Oshawa; Rachel Santini, York South–Weston; Melanie Soltau, Oak Ridges–Markham; John Tatsiou, Toronto–Danforth; Leena Tran, York West; Jonah Villanueva Merali, Trinity–Spadina; Chelsea Wallace, Toronto Centre; Maggy Watson, Niagara West–Glanbrook; Jasmyn Yattavong, Brampton–Springdale; and Viktor Zhou, Scarborough Centre.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Please reassume your positions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SMART METERS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, in municipal elections last fall and the federal election on Monday, Ontario families chose leaders who respect their need for relief—relief for average hard-working families. Yet you've become so out of touch that yesterday you took the extraordinary step of inviting the media into your caucus room to witness you telling the Liberal caucus, "Don't panic." You told them that you were going to stay the course and continue to increase taxes, increase hydro rates and increase government spending.

Does your attitude, Premier, mean that you are going to continue down the path and impose your smart meter tax machines on every household in the province despite the fact that they can't afford to pay the bills?

1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's just a lot of doom and gloom over there these days. I'm reminded that somebody once said, "It's hard to be angry and smart at the same time."



I would encourage my honourable colleague to use his better judgment and acknowledge that Ontario is not that bad a place in which we might choose to live and to recognize a few facts. We are turning the corner out of the global recession: 93% of our jobs are back. That contrasts with the US, where it's only 15%. We're the first in Canada and second in North America in attracting new job-creating investments, according to the FDI report. And according to the Programme for International Student Assessment, our schools are now in the top 10 globally.

Again, I think that speaks to the importance of the direction that we continue to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, of course Ontario is an incredible place with extraordinary potential. We just need a change in leadership to become the leader again in Canada and not a have-not province.

Premier, I think the fact that you're going headlong down this path with your smart meter tax machines shows how dramatically out of touch you have become with average, everyday families. We found out that this week, the McGuinty government flipped the switch to the expensive time-of-use setting on the two millionth smart meter. That means that some senior citizens will be living in a cold house, afraid to turn the heat on. It will mean that some young family will have all of the kids lined up by 7 a.m. to have their shower before the higher rates kick in.

Premier, are you so bound and determined to suck more money out of their pockets that you are going to do a million more?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to give credit to my colleague for his fanciful interpretation and his creativity. There's no shortage of innovation coming from the mind of my honourable colleague.

The fact of the matter is that we have smart meters in place because they're helping us to put in place a modern, efficient, reliable, clean, job-creating electricity system. I would encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at what they're doing in the United Kingdom, where the new Prime Minister there has decided to accelerate the program to put in smart meters throughout the country because, in fact, they have the desired and intended effect.

I also want to remind my honourable colleague that, as of the 1st of May, we have increased our discount period for electricity rates. We brought it down from 9 o'clock in the evening; it now begins at 7 o'clock in the evening. The discount period is now fully from 7 at night till 7 in the morning. That's another 10 hours every week of discounted electricity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you just don't get it. I'm talking about real senior citizens who come up to me with their hydro bill in their hand, their hand shaking, with sadness and anger in their eyes, saying that they

can't afford to pay the bills—real-life Ontario seniors who are living in cold houses because of your time-of-use smart meters that are nothing more than tax machines.

You've managed to raise rates on your smart meters eight times in five years alone. We understand from your meeting with caucus yesterday that you plan to continue increasing hydro rates and taxes on the backs of these same families.

Premier, if you don't understand what's happening in households, listen to the Ontario PC caucus. Will you pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines and give families a choice in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I understand that my honourable colleague says these things with tremendous intensity and with his usual decibel level, but I don't believe him. I'm just going to be straight with you, Speaker: I don't believe him. I don't believe him, because he's wrong.

We put in place an intelligent, thoughtful, progressive plan to deal with our electricity needs. People need to remember that we came from a place where we were facing a desperate shortage of electricity in the province of Ontario. We've worked long and hard with Ontarians during the course of the past seven-plus years now.

It's not an easy thing to do, and there are costs associated with it; we've been up front with the people of Ontario about that. But we want to make sure that when they go to flick that switch, there's electricity there for them. We know there's a cost, so we've put in place a new clean energy benefit that's cutting 10% off of our electricity bills for the course of the next five years.

We're cleaning our air, keeping our bills down and creating thousands of jobs.

## SMART METERS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, I don't know what kind of bubble you're living in. We hear from families each and every day that say they can't afford the basics. They can't pay their hydro bills.

If you don't believe us, members of your own caucus should be telling you this, because we hear from families each and every day. The Ontario PCs will stand up for those families, we'll stand up for the seniors, and that's why we'll pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines.

Premier, if you don't believe me and you don't believe your own Liberal caucus, then listen to your hydro utilities. PowerStream, the second-largest hydro company in Ontario, has written to the Ontario Energy Board. They're asking for this experiment to be postponed because they say they're worried about "the impact of potential bill increases" on their customers.

Premier, if you won't listen to me, will you listen to the second-largest utility in the province that's saying no to your smart meter tax machines?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just can't accept what my honourable colleague is introducing here as fact. I want

to remind my honourable colleague of where we found ourselves in 2002—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members, please come to order. We have a number of guests here today who want to hear both the questions and the answers.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague where we found ourselves in 2003, and I want to remind him of something by way of a notice put up by the Independent Electricity System Operator. They said at the time: There are “significant strains on the power system. A large amount of electricity is being imported, but we still face possible shortages. Unless there is an immediate drop in consumption, we may be required to take protective actions, which could include voltage reductions, or rotating cuts to supply without any additional notice.”

I remember that. My honourable colleague chooses not to remember that, but the fact was that we were in desperate circumstances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, families are not bringing me hydro bills from 10 years ago. They’re bringing me hydro bills from 2011, and they’re saying, “Tim, I can’t pay these bills, and I can’t afford these smart meter tax machines that are forcing families to have all the kids showered by 7 a.m.”

The Premier just blithely rejects it. He says he’s not hearing about hydro bills when he goes across the province. That might be why he regally declared that Saturdays will now be laundry days across our province, to cope with your smart meter tax machines.

Premier, will you at least listen to PowerStream? Will you at least listen to the other utilities that are saying, “This is not broken”? Will you do what we would do and pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind my honourable colleague, so that he can pass on this information to Ontarians, that there are now 10 extra hours a week of lower prices. I’d also recommend to my honourable colleague that he take a look at the example bill put out by the Ontario Energy Board just recently, which speaks in detail and in fact about what’s happened to our bills in Ontario.

I’d also recommend to my honourable colleague that at some point in time he tell Ontarians by how much he intends to reduce their electricity bills. We’re reducing them by 10%. It would be interesting to know if, at some point in time, they have some kind of a plan that goes beyond burning coal, that goes beyond ripping up contracts that we’ve entered into for clean energy and getting rid of all those jobs. At some point in time, he may want to introduce his plan to the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, the Premier is moving from being out of touch to bordering on arrogance. He expects

us to dance in the streets now that he has decreed that we get 10 extra hours, a whole week—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The comments that I just made to the opposition about hearing the other side: I offer the same comments to the government side as well. We do have guests who want to hear both questions and answers.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier, not too long ago, regally declared that Saturdays shall henceforth be laundry days in our province, and now with the same tone he declares we get 10 extra hours, a whole week of lower rates.

Premier, the Ontario PCs believe that Ontario families deserve better, and that’s why we’ll pull the plug on your mandatory smart machines that are taking more and more money out of Ontario families’ pockets. It’s not simply PowerStream, Premier; 28 local hydro companies—over one third—have called for relief from switching on the switch to the most expensive time-of-use rates. That’s why we pulled the plug.

Premier, don’t you get it? Why won’t you do the same?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my honourable colleague likes to pay close attention to political events beyond Ontario, and I’m sure he’s paying attention to what has happened in the United Kingdom. I just want to quote something that was put out by that government: “The rollout of smart meters will play an important role in Britain’s transition to a low-carbon economy, and help us meet some of the long-term challenges we face in ensuring an affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply.”

1050

Again, I’d encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at what has, in fact, happened to smart meters as they are being used today in BC, Quebec, the US, Italy, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. I could go on, but the fact of the matter is, we’re moving ahead to put in place a progressive, intelligent, affordable, reliable clean electricity system that is creating jobs.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. During the federal election, the Premier said that he wanted a new national health accord and that he wants to see reforms. Ontario families are already concerned about the state of health care in this province. They want some specifics from the Premier. What does he want to see reformed?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I hope that we’ll have some support from my honourable colleague when it comes to our new engagement with the federal government on putting in place a new 10-year accord. I know that the present arrangement expires in 2014. We’re absolutely convinced that we can put to bed a new arrangement by the end of 2012, and I hope I would have my honourable



colleague's support in ensuring that we come to the table with a single-minded purpose, and that is to ensure that we secure medicare for the future. We're not going to be defenders of the status quo when it comes to our medicare system, but we do insist that we maintain medicare in a way that ensures that it evolves, that we introduce reforms so that it's there for our children and our grandchildren. I hope I have my honourable colleague's support in that matter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Given the Premier's track record, Ontarians have every right to worry. They've seen first-hand this government's approach to health care. Services have been cut, delisted, privatized. Families are not getting the health care they need and deserve. But instead of doing his job and delivering for Ontarians right here at home, he is musing about a new national health care accord. When will he turn his attention to the immediate health care needs of Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague just a little bit about our record. She knows that we're building 18 new hospitals. She knows that we've hired 11,000 more nurses. She knows we have 2,900 more doctors. She knows we have 200 new family health teams. She knows we're putting in place 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics. She knows that we now have the shortest wait times in the country. But what she may not know is something we announced just this morning: We are expanding pharmacy services for seniors and social assistance recipients. They now are going to have more access to free consultations with their local pharmacists.

Seniors, in particular, can have a challenge when it comes to dealing with all their medications, and sometimes they end up in the hospital because of a mix-up. We want to make sure we address that issue. We're inviting seniors to go in and visit their pharmacist. We're now providing a new free service to help them ensure they're taking the right drugs in the right way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We're getting a real sense of the Premier's election strategy, his re-election strategy: He's going to try to position himself as the great defender of Ontario's interests. He's going to be glossing over—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I could shorten the member from Simcoe North's stay in this House.

In all sincerity, we do know that there's going to be an election, but to start making direct comments at other members in this House as to who's here and who's not going to be here—I can honestly say that I won't be here, but I don't need to hear shots being delivered across the floor at one another, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** With those kinds of displays, Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful from the member from Renfrew.

Please continue.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, these guys are so out of touch, they don't even get sarcasm when they see it. The Premier is going to be glossing over his own record by diverting attention to the federal government, but the issue is, why isn't he spending his time, his focus, his attention, on the health care needs of everyday families in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That's what we've been doing for eight years, and I think, by any objective measure, we've made significant strides forward.

What I would invite my honourable colleague to understand is that we are always at our best when we work together. We need a strong federal partner who's not only committed to ensuring that we have additional funding to accommodate the growing pressures within our health care system, but we are also looking for a partner in Ottawa who's committed to medicare, who believes in universality, who believes that every Canadian from coast to coast to coast, as they say, receives the same high-quality health care within the framework of the medicare system that we have created here inside the country.

I think my honourable colleague might want to join me in that particular regard, to ensure that as we make progress inside the province, we also put in place a new deal that will last us for the next 10 years.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Premier: Here's the problem with the Premier's position: His government has little credibility left on the health care file. They have slashed services. They have delisted others. They have closed ERs. They have reduced front-line staff. Now the Premier wants to negotiate a new health accord. How can Ontarians have faith that this Premier is up to doing that job?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say with the greatest respect to my honourable colleague, I'm not sure how far she's going to get pursuing that line of attack.

I think, by any objective assessment, we have made real, measurable improvement. Funding alone has been increased by over 50% since 2003.

Again, I'll go through the list for my honourable colleague: 18 new hospitals; 11,000 more nurses; 2,900 more doctors. We had zero family health teams; now we're up to 200: They're looking after three million patients. We have 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics; 10,000 more long-term-care beds. We've got 176 new drugs that we've added to the public drug plan. We've increased breast cancer screening by 90,000 more through this particular—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In communities across Ontario, it's families who are coping with the consequences

of this government's health care failings. I have to state them again, clearly. Emergency rooms are closing. Nurses are being let go. Long waits for long-term-care beds do exist. Seniors are being forced to pay to stay in the hospital. Home care has been privatized.

Given the litany of the health care problems created by this government, does the Premier actually believe he's the best person to negotiate on Ontario's behalf?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would argue that, as I said many times before, for our province leadership is not an option. I would argue that we have been commissioned by history to play a leadership role in the continuing evolution of this great country, and there's an important debate that we're about to enter upon right now, which is the future of our health care system—in fact, the very future of medicare itself.

Again, I would invite my honourable colleague to join with me and in fact, I believe, the people of Ontario, in ensuring that we secure a new arrangement with the federal government that not only accommodates our financial pressures but also ensures that we can look our children and grandchildren in the eye and say, "The benefits that we enjoyed under our medicare system: We worked hard to ensure they are there for you and for your children as well."

I think that's our shared responsibility, and I invite my honourable colleague to join me in that regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

1100

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In his public musings, the Premier said he wants a new 10-year health accord. Ontario has an election in five months. At that time, Ontarians will decide who they want to trust on the health care file. Since the Premier has no mandate whatsoever to start negotiations, will he at least agree to do the respectful thing and wait for the verdict of Ontarians?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague is suggesting that we should somehow put down our tools when it comes to fighting for medicare for the future. That is something we are never, ever prepared to do.

Again, I would have thought that when it comes to my honourable colleague and the New Democratic tradition, which she represents in the province of Ontario, there'd be very little daylight between us in this regard. I thought that I would have her support when it comes to making representations to the federal government to ensure that we begin work as soon as possible to cobble together a new arrangement, a new agreement that secures medicare for the future.

Again, I invite my honourable colleague to join us in this quest to protect medicare for the future.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch that he's the only one in Ontario who believes that hydro bills have gone down. He should take a look behind him and he'll see all

the startled faces in his Liberal caucus. Every time the Premier says that hydro bills have flatlined, it looks to us like it's the members of the Liberal caucus who have flatlined over there. Even they aren't buying what Premier McGuinty is selling, and they know they can't sell such an absurd proposition to Ontario families at the door.

Why should Ontario families believe what Premier McGuinty says about hydro bills when even his own Liberal family doesn't believe him?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member and his leader continue to try to make things up here in this Legislature. The reason for that is the Ontario Energy Board, a couple of weeks ago, blew their cover. The fact of the matter is, according to the Ontario Energy Board, bills have stabilized over the last year. Bills are flat. Those members may not want to admit that because the facts get in the way of a story for them, but the facts are the facts are the facts.

Bills are going down. Our clean energy benefit is having the desired effect. All the while, we're building a strong, clean, reliable, modern energy system, and they've been resisting that every step of the way because they want to take us back to their dirty old days of a dirty, unreliable and outdated system. Ontarians don't want to go there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The fact that Premier McGuinty gave his caucus an emergency pep talk yesterday shows that he knows no one is buying his absurd line that hydro bills are the same this year as last. The Premier is so out of touch, he said he's sticking to his guns and putting it on the heads of his caucus to sell his hydro increases. No wonder there are so many gloomy faces over there. My guess is, he called the media into his emergency pep talk yesterday to buffer himself from Liberal caucus members who know that Ontario families will punish them at the door if they try to make this turkey fly at the doorstep.

Premier, why won't you give Ontario families a break from your hydro rate increases and, at the same time, give your caucus a break from this incredibly embarrassing situation?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The only political parties that don't want to give families a break on their energy rates are those guys, because they don't support the clean energy—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'd say to a number of ministers that one of your ministerial colleagues is trying to answer a question and you are shouting across the floor, drowning out your own minister. I can't hear your minister because of the interjections. I'd ask you to be respectful of your own caucus.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The only parties in this Legislature that don't support helping Ontario families out with their energy bills are the Tories and the NDP, who don't support our clean energy benefit that's stabilizing rates.



Let's go back to the old days and what that very member had to say back then about their energy system. This is what he said—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** My comments again hold true to both sides of the House. One of your colleagues just asked a question. I think he would like to hear what the minister has to say.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As quickly as I can: "This summer when we didn't have enough electricity in this province because we hit peak high temperatures and all the air conditioners were running, we had to buy power.... I had to pay \$7 million one day to keep the air conditioners on in our hospitals." According to that member opposite—this is what he said: "That was highway robbery."

That was their system. We're building a clean, reliable, modern system that Ontario families can count on. They don't support it, but that's what—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Can the Premier explain why his government voted down the number one recommendation from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions to move mental health services for children and youth to the Ministry of Health?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to speak about this important issue. I couldn't be prouder to be part of a government who issued a recent budget that put children's mental health back on the map. The investments that we are making in children's mental health are historic, and I am so pleased to be working with my colleagues the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as we find a way to make sure that we use that significant historic investment to its wisest; to make sure that we get services out to the front line; to make sure we respond to the needs of children and families right across this province.

That's where our focus is. We're focused on service delivery, on getting those wait times down and on giving the kids and families the very services that they need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If you want those dollars to pay dividends, you have to bring children's mental health under the Ministry of Health. These are not kids with bad behaviours; these are kids who are sick. They have a mental illness. We're talking about kids who are suicidal, kids who are cutting themselves, kids who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. These kids are suffering, and they are not getting the care they need because they don't have that behaviour. They are sick and they belong under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Can the minister explain today, during Children's Mental Health Week, to those kids who are dealing with mental health issues why you're turning your back on them and why the Liberal members of the select committee voted against their own recommendation?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Frankly, I thought the member opposite understood this issue more than she does, for her to say that we are turning our backs on children in this province.

I, too, have travelled across the province and had an opportunity to speak to families about what they need. They need us to deliver these services in a way that doesn't stigmatize kids, that makes sure that the services are close to home, and that makes sure that we speak to the issues that families are calling upon.

I would suggest to her that she needs to take a look at those experts that are out in the field that have given us good advice. I'll talk about Gordon Floyd, the president and CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario: "We've heard for years promises about investments to children's mental health to close the gap and shorten the waiting lines and this government has put it forward." We are the government that is going to make historic steps when it comes to ensuring that services are available for kids. We're very proud—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We know how important our publicly funded universal health care system is to the people of Ontario. We also know that as we move forward, there are always opportunities for us to strengthen our cherished and vitally important public health care system. As a matter of fact, this government has already taken a number of significant steps in improving the quality of care for Ontarians while finding efficiencies to reinvest in more and better front-line care across the province.

Minister, as you know well, there have been numerous significant investments for hospitals in my community of Ottawa, as there have been across the province. But Minister, while the McGuinty government has made remarkable progress in rebuilding and reinvesting in our health care infrastructure and capabilities, can you please tell us how we have been improving the quality of care for Ontario's patients to ensure the system is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the member from Ottawa Centre for this very important question. The only way we can preserve our cherished universal health care system is to make the changes that are necessary so it's there for our kids and for our grandkids. The status quo is simply not an option.

1110

One of the steps we've taken is the Excellent Care for All Act. This is legislation that helps refocus our health

care system, refocus our efforts on high-quality care for patients. It requires our health care partners, starting with hospitals, to create quality committees, to look at quality indicators, to make sure that patients and that staff are taken into the conversation around those quality indicators. They have to develop and post quality improvement plans. And, Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** This focus on excellent quality health care is an incredibly valuable goal for Ontario's patients. We know that our citizens fundamentally want a system that is not only strong, well equipped and capable; they also want a system that is compassionate and focused on helping Ontarians, not just during their greatest times of need but also serving them throughout their life.

As the minister said, we need to have a sustainable system if we hope to continue achieving these goals. I know from speaking with my constituents that they ask us to ensure that it is efficient by achieving savings now and also by making smart investments to improve our overall health, saving future costs, not to mention improving people's quality of life.

Minister, this government has taken large steps to find efficiencies in our health care system, which have allowed us to invest in front-line care for Ontarians. Can you tell the House about some of the ways that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about some of the ways we're getting better value for our health care dollars. We're now saving \$500 million each year because we lowered the price of generic drugs. This has helped us fund 35 new cancer drugs. We've expanded the number of bariatric surgeries being performed right here in Ontario so that we don't need to send patients out of country to receive that care. That's saving us an estimated \$45 million this year. By investing in more vaccinations for children, we're going to save significant health costs down the road.

We're also serious about preventing illness through health promotion. The causes here are straightforward: poor diet, lack of activity, and smoking. We're taking steps to keep Ontarians healthy and get them healthier.

We're finding many ways to get better value for our taxpayer dollars. This is work—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### SMART METERS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Premier. A smart meter tax revolt is under way to put a stop to Premier McGuinty increasing hydro bills before he increases them again. PowerStream, the local hydro company in my riding, has joined the smart meter tax revolt. They say that they are taking up the fight against your smart

meter tax machines to "mitigate the impact of potential business bill increases."

Will you stop driving up hydro bills with your expensive tax machines before small businesses are driven out of the province? Or are you so out of touch that you'll only stop once they are completely driven out of business?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We all know the member opposite very, very well, and I would think that she would want her constituents to be very well-informed on these issues. I think it's important that all Ontarians are well-informed on these issues. I certainly invite her to my office and would be happy to brief her on the Ontario Energy Board report last week, which indicated, indeed, for those on time-of-use and those who are not yet on time-of-use—that their bills are flatlined over last year. That's because of our clean energy benefit.

She may want to mention to her constituents as well that she and her party did not support that clean energy benefit. That's why they're afraid to share their plan with Ontario families, because the first piece of their plan is to jack bills up by 10% as they cancel our clean energy benefit. That is not in the interest of her—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Families have joined the smart meter tax revolt; small businesses have joined. Now even 28 of the local hydro companies themselves are joining. But you are sticking to your guns, enforcing mandatory time-of-use on millions of families and businesses anyway.

It shouldn't take a smart meter tax revolt to get a break. An Ontario PC government would take a different path and look for ways to give families relief from the skyrocketing hydro bills. Why are you continuing down the same path of hydro increases that are making families go broke and small businesses go bankrupt?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member opposite can twist it, torque it and talk about information that is not accurate all she wants, but the fact of the matter is, the Ontario Energy Board does not have that luxury. The Ontario Energy Board is a regulatory agency, and what they have said is that indeed bills are flat from last year. They have been stabilized as a result of our clean energy benefit. So rather than talk about information that's not factual, the member should be letting her constituents know about that.

The member should be explaining to her constituents why she doesn't support the 10% reduction that we put in place for Ontario families' bills. It's saving Ontario families \$150 a year, stabilizing their bills, and you don't support that.

I can understand why she's not comfortable with this issue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you will know that Dubreuilville is a com-



munity that totally relies on the forest industry for its survival. At a reception last night, you ran across Louise Perrier, the mayor of Dubreuilville, and she asked you directly if you're prepared to intervene to make sure that the wood that your minister took away from that community will be reallocated to that community in order to continue. Will you intervene, and will you make sure that Dubreuilville gets the wood it needs so that it can continue to survive?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Certainly the Premier spoke to me earlier about the opportunity he had to meet with Mayor Perrier, and I welcome her and others from Dubreuilville.

As the member knows, the wood supply competition which we put in place has put back to work about 2.5 million cubic metres of wood that has not been harvested for some time—and we're very excited about that—and also created or retained over 1,500 jobs in a number of communities across northern Ontario. We had a chance last week to make two more announcements, and we have more to come.

Having said that, we are incredibly sensitive to the challenges facing those communities such as Dubreuilville that were not successful in terms of the wood supply competition.

I also had an opportunity to meet with Mayor Perrier yesterday. May I say that her hard-working member, the MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Brown, has been extremely aggressive about supporting the community. We're working together to try to find a very positive solution for the community.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Premier, can I have your attention? Thank you. The mayor of Dubreuilville asked you, the top person in the government, to intervene. She has not got satisfaction through the ministry. The ministry has taken away her wood. The question was: Are you prepared, as Premier, to intervene to make sure the community gets the wood that was taken away from them?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We are engaged in very good discussions with Mayor Perrier. We are working together on dealing with the challenge that has faced the community related to the fact that under the wood supply competition, there were some communities that were successful and some that were not. We had a very positive meeting yesterday. The Premier did speak to me this morning. Mr. Brown, the MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, has been very aggressively looking for a solution, and we are doing everything we can. I think if you speak to the mayor, she will indicate that indeed we had positive discussions yesterday.

There is no question that there's a real challenge. We have some extraordinarily good news related to the wood supply competition in communities all across northern Ontario, but there are challenges associated with the fact that not all communities were successful.

I will continue to work closely with the mayor and the community to do what we can to see a positive resolution of this challenge for the community.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, I thought that one thing that we all agreed on in this House was making sure that our kids had clean air to breathe. The opposition's call for a moratorium on renewable energy shows that that's not the case. We know they didn't believe it eight years ago when they increased coal emissions 124%.

My constituents in Ottawa-Orléans know that developing renewable energy is the right thing to do for cleaner air and more local jobs. But they want to know if it's true that once a company announces a new project—do the municipalities and the public have any say?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Under the law and under the Green Energy Act and the regulations, it's indeed the case that both the public and municipalities have their say. We've been very clear that we will say no unless municipalities and the public have been given their say. That's why we use that process.

Interestingly, my ministry has received some 45 applications for proposed wind projects, and 24 have been rejected. Why? Because there has not been sufficient consultation, both with the public and the municipality.

1120

We say to our municipal partners, "We need your feedback and we'll take it whatever way that you want to provide it, but it is important for you to let us know what are the concerns of your municipalities."

We want to be very, very clear that people have a right to clean air but they also have the right to a good night's sleep, and we need to hear people's concerns so we can address them in any approval.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Minister, I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear you correct that misconception. I'm glad to hear you confirm that there are clear setbacks and a clear process for municipal consultation, and that municipal consultation is embedded right in the approvals process for any other renewable project.

Some residents are also concerned, however, that our stringent 40-decibel limit for wind turbines might be exceeded and that there is nothing they can do about it. Will the minister tell us why he is unwilling or unable to follow up on these calls from local residents?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** The reason there is a Minister of the Environment is to protect human health. That's what we do, each and every day. We want to tell people that if they have concerns about any project, concerns about a wind turbine, they can call our ministry.

There was a recent report that said that in the last couple of years, with some 800 turbines in the province of Ontario, we received some 757 complaints, but they came from 50 individuals, primarily from 20 individuals.

We take all of those calls very, very seriously. That's why we've taken action. We'll continue to take action until the calls stop, because we expect wind turbine companies to be good neighbours. The vast majority of them

want to be good neighbours, but they know that the Ministry of the Environment has ultimate say about their ability to produce renewable energy, which we want, and therefore they pay attention. When we call them, it's because their neighbours are calling us, and we take the calls of the neighbours very, very seriously.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. I have an open letter sent to you and the Premier from Gord Taylor, president of the Ontario School Bus Association. In it, Mr. Taylor expresses OSBA's increasing concern about your new school transportation procurement policy and its threat to the sustainability of the industry.

He states, "We had a clear understanding that the ministry would set the ground rules of this transition. That has not happened. Instead, the worst-case scenario is happening." And then he goes on to say that that includes a lack of transparency, accountability and full disclosure of the results to all involved.

Both busing organizations are now telling you that the new policy is a failure. Will you respond to their demand to put an immediate halt to the new policy and meet with them to get it right?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to say in the House that both the Premier and I have had the opportunity to meet with leadership of the school bus operators' association, so we are very aware of their issues.

The honourable member would know that the Provincial Auditor has provided us with some clear direction around how we engage services. The Provincial Auditor has some comments about sole-sourced contracts, and that is why the process that is used by school boards to engage them—we are looking to improve that.

We are definitely open to working with bus operators on this. That is why, as well, we have chosen to move forward in a piloted way, and we are going to look very carefully at the results from the pilots. We want to ensure, moving forward, that we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Minister of Education: Both groups are telling you to immediately suspend your process. It is threatening the livelihood of the school bus operators as well as the entire industry.

You talk about the pilots. Well, the results are in: The Wellington-Dufferin pilot project resulted in 103 of the 105 routes being stripped from Ontario's small businesses and given to multinationals. I have heard from families who are concerned about the fact that you're not addressing the issue now.

I ask you again, on behalf of the independents and the school bus association, who are desperately concerned: Will you put a stop to your new flawed policy and meet with them to develop a new plan?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, meeting with bus operators is something that we have done and I've committed to do going forward.

I think it's important for the people of Ontario to appreciate that with the pilot the honourable member referenced, there were also small bus operators who actually gained routes in that process. So they're telling one part of the story.

That being said, I will say that with respect to the second pilot, we have made some changes to the process—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sorry, Minister. The member from Durham, the member from Oxford and the member from Simcoe North will please come to order. The member from Halton.

Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** What we want to ensure going forward is that boards are able to engage those faithful, reliable services to carry children to school in a cost-effective way. We have been working with bus operators. We are committed to continuing to do so going forward so that boards will be able to provide safe transportation to their schools for all of their students.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. A US company wants to build the second-largest quarry in North America near Shelburne, which would destroy productive farmland and could threaten the area's water, right at the headwaters of rivers that provide drinking water for more than a million Ontarians.

The government has extended the short 45-day public comment period for this project by about 30 days, but submissions received after April 26 will not even get a response. Why is this government limiting public consultation and refusing to allow a full environmental assessment of this massive and potentially destructive project?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I understand that there's been local concern expressed about the aggregate licence application from Highland Companies in Melancthon township. I can confirm that our local district office has received the licence application.

I want to make it really clear: This is only the beginning of the Aggregate Resources Act process. While legally I cannot extend the comment period, I did mention that I wanted to consider comments outside of the official objection period. As I've stated in the House, I can confirm that I have extended the EBR comment period now to 120 days in order to accommodate any of those additional comments.

As I said, it's early in the process. We want to hear from municipalities and neighbours because we understand that local citizens are concerned with the project and they want to be involved in the consultation process. We get it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?



**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians want the government to do more to protect our watershed. They don't just want to be listened to; they want to be talked to as well. They want responses to their submissions.

Over 1,400 people are urging greater protection of waters in the Oak Ridges moraine—and I'll pass the evidence of those 1,400 people over to the Premier by way of Jonathan, the page—yet the McGuinty government is allowing this US company to dig a 2,400-acre quarry deeper than Niagara Falls without a full environmental assessment.

Why won't the government designate this project as an undertaking under the Environmental Assessment Act and require a full environmental assessment with full public participation before this project is approved?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** As I stated earlier, this is the very beginning of the process. What I have done is I've listened to the residents. I spoke with the mayor. I spoke with the member in the Conservative Party who questioned me on this issue.

I'm not sure why you can't take yes for an answer. The request was, "Can you extend the period?" I have extended the period for people to participate in the process. It's the beginning of the process. We have to talk to all of the residents, and there is an opportunity for the municipality to work with us to try to resolve as many objections as possible. We have extended the process. I've provided that evidence in the newspaper. I've provided it in an editorial to the community.

Even before the application was submitted, I knew that it was the subject of many local petitions and interest. I know the residents are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question's for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In recent months, there has been significant public discussion regarding the necessity of continued support for literacy skills training in Ontario. Many community groups came forward requesting additional support for their programs, and there were concerns that federal funding would be eliminated as it was scheduled to end in March of this year. At that time, I had asked you how we planned on providing the needed support for these essential services in our communities.

1130

As you know, there are approximately 300 sites across the province delivering literacy and basic skills programs. In my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, there are a number of local organizations that provide basic skills training for adult learners through organizations such as the Algoma District School Board, the Huron-Superior board, Sault College, the Indian Friendship Centre and Program Read. Minister, what steps have been taken to ensure the continued support of literacy skills training in our local communities?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the question from the member and I appreciate the support from all members of the House who have come to me to express concern about the need for increased literacy training in the province of Ontario, particularly during the period of the recession.

Through a partnership with the federal government, we were able to invest more in terms of literacy training over the last two years. Despite my efforts in making presentations to the federal government and the support of many literacy providers in going forward to the federal government, that funding was discontinued on March 31.

I was very pleased, however, that our government, in the most recent budget, came forward with a \$44-million commitment to literacy training over the next three years, including an additional \$13 million a year in base budget increases for literacy providers across the province, including, of course—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Minister, I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue. I was pleased to see funding devoted to these much-needed literacy and basic skills programs announced in our government's 2011 budget.

Providing individuals with the tools to improve their knowledge and skills contributes in a positive way to their overall quality of life. Higher levels of literacy raise an individual's employment opportunities and provide them with the opportunity to apply for better-paying jobs. Higher levels of literacy are also associated with higher levels of involvement in various community groups and organizations and in volunteering activities. Ensuring that all Ontarians have the opportunity to upgrade their skills is one of the best investments we can make. Not only does it help people succeed in their career goals but it builds a strong foundation for our local economy.

Minister, what specifically are we doing to provide support to our literacy groups, and how will we make sure that these services are available for those who need them most?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Let me share some statistics with the House—with the honourable member and the House—about support within northern Ontario. This funding is going to help northern Ontario literacy providers.

Right now, adults can get help with literacy and basic skills for free at 83 sites in northern Ontario, including colleges, school boards and community-based organizations. In northern Ontario, these organizations that deliver literacy and basic skills training are receiving more than \$14 million to help 8,366 learners this year.

In the riding of Sault Ste. Marie, over \$1.2 million will be provided to the six organizations referenced, helping an additional 964 learners. This additional funding will support Ontarians who are looking to upgrade their skills and move on to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR  
THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY  
TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Attorney General. Once again, I rise to call into question the mismanagement and unjust actions by a McGuinty government agency.

Recently, in the case of Ralph Hunter, a resident of Iroquois, the Ontario Court of Justice dismissed the charges and admonished the actions of the OSPCA and their inspector, Bonnie Bishop. Once again, rural Ontarians are being harassed to the point where the actions of the OSPCA are violating our charter rights to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure. Minister, when will this government finally hold the OSPCA to account and show rural Ontario that the abusive actions against Mr. Hunter will not be tolerated?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As you would know, the OSPCA is responsible for, in the province of Ontario, enforcing the laws which, I think, members of this House agreed to some time ago.

I think it would be totally inappropriate for me to comment on matters that have been before the court because, as the member knows—and if he were to consult people who have been either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General of the province of Ontario in years gone by, he would know—it is inappropriate, particularly where there may be an appeal that might take place, for a minister of the crown to comment one way or another on these situations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll put it back to the Attorney General. My honourable colleague from Newmarket—Aurora brought a motion to this House that your government voted against, a motion that would have reviewed the powers and the authority delegated to the OSPCA and would have provided much-needed oversight. It is nothing new for this government to ignore the mismanagement and the abuse by its agencies, boards and commissions. However, when the actions of OSPCA officials are admonished by the courts on the grounds of being unconstitutional, such abuses reach a new low.

We have seen this growing trend with your government that believes justice is optional—just ask Roy McMurry. When will this government take responsibility and show rural Ontarians that their privacy and property will be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I have been reading certain publications that have had some rather startling revelations that would be perhaps embarrassing to the government caucus—sorry, to the Conservative caucus. Annoying, perhaps, to the government caucus, but embarrassing to the Conservative caucus. This is the member who persuaded his leader, as a condition of supporting him for the leadership, to—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Answer the bloody question, Jim.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Lanark: You just asked the question. You know the standing orders in the House. After you have heard the answer and you're not satisfied, you can call for a late show.

Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is the member, I can say, that persuaded his leader, as a condition of support for leadership, to agree to abolish—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I just want to caution the minister to stick to answering the question and not—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Lanark will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, I'll withdraw when that minister withdraws.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** An unequivocal withdrawal.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll withdraw, and I would expect the same from that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm going to give you one last opportunity—just an unequivocal withdrawal.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL  
HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Tatiana is a single mother in my community whose son needs constant care. Her son Radu is non-verbal and high-needs. His day program at school ends in June. He's come to the end of those programs. She has no alternative. She will have to quit work and go on welfare to look after him.

Money has been pledged for children's mental health, but no program exists now to give this family the help it needs. Will you, Minister, see that this mother can continue to work and this young man can receive care by directing your staff to use the money allocated?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services, please.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about—yes, again—the investments that our government will be making in children's mental health. We know that this is a significant need in many communities across the province. We're very proud of the record that we have of putting kids first when it comes to ensuring that we build a bright future in this province. Investments like the Ontario child benefit—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East would please return to his seat and withdraw the comment that he made.



**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Minister, I appreciate the commentary. The situation we face is, the mother is exhausted. She really is coming to the end of her rope on this. Very soon, she will have to quit her job to look after her son full-time.

Can you commit that your staff will work with the family and do all they can to ensure that the supports are in place when this young man no longer can go to the daycare programs that she has depended on?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'll take the question as one that the member opposite wants to advocate on behalf of his constituent, and I appreciate that advocacy. I would suggest to him that the best place to advocate for our constituents is not always on the floor during question period. I certainly look forward to an opportunity to look into this issue.

I'm very pleased at the initiatives that our government has taken. We've invested in child care, we've invested in the Ontario child benefit, we've invested in a great deal of services for kids and families, and we've focused on women's economic independence to make sure that women can go out into the workforce and make sure that they have an envelope of support around them. The members opposite have not always supported us in these initiatives.

I certainly take the member at his word, that he looks to advocate for his constituent. I look forward to more details with respect to this issue and having an opportunity to focus on this. But I certainly do look for his support as we move forward with a number of other initiatives when it comes to supporting kids. I hope that the New Democratic Party will support us because often, in the past, they have not.

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question is for the Minister of Education. More than ever, our students are going to require the specialized skills needed to ensure their success in an ever-changing economy. They need these skills to meet the demands that will be placed upon them in a competitive and fast-paced job market in the future. We all agree that we need to ensure that students excel in school in order to become successful members of Ontario's workforce. It's important to me and my constituents in Peterborough that students in Peterborough have the opportunities to achieve the best results for themselves and our economy.

Minister, I'm hearing from constituents that it is difficult to get highly skilled trades workers. What is our government doing to help ensure our young people are prepared to go on to an apprenticeship, college or university?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Actually, our government is committed to ensuring that we prepare students for lives in skilled trades and technology, and that is why we introduced and have implemented the specialist high-

skills-major programs in our secondary schools. I'm happy to say that over 34,000 students will be participating in over 1,300 programs offered in more than 600 secondary schools. Those numbers speak to the fact that this is a program that is taking off in our secondary schools.

Yesterday, I was at RIM Park at the Skills Canada performance; it was an exhibition of students from these programs who were showing off their skills. They're going to go on and become a part of our workforce and help build the economy of Ontario. We're very proud of the students who graduate from these programs.

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to correct my record in regard to part one of question five. What I should have said is that the government has extended their short, 45-day public comment period for this project by 75 days. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That is a point of order. The honourable member is allowed to correct his or her own record.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Ça me fait plaisir de vous présenter des personnes qui seront décorées dans quelques instants par le lieutenant-gouverneur; des personnes qui ont contribué à la francophonie de la province de l'Ontario. Ce sont M<sup>me</sup> Mariette Dallaire, MM. Yves Saint-Denis et Félix Saint-Denis—le père et le fils, une première mondiale—M. Alain Baudot, M<sup>me</sup> Marguerite Martel et M. Jean-Marc Aubin, qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui dans la galerie du Président. Bienvenue ici même à Queen's Park.

**M. Phil McNeely:** J'aimerais introduire mon assistante, Anick Tremblay, qui est ici du bureau d'Ottawa-Orléans. Elle est ici aujourd'hui pour participer à la présentation des décorations de l'Ordre de la Pléiade.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member of Kingston and the Islands, to welcome to the members' gallery today Ann Bryan-McFie, president of the Kingston Professional Firefighters Association; Fred LeBlanc, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association; and the other Ontario firefighters joining them. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Having been introduced by the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, I too would like to take this opportunity to welcome in the Speaker's gallery today the recipients of the Ordre de la Pléiade, recognizing their outstanding contributions to the French-speaking communities in the province.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask all members to please join me in warmly welcoming our guests and thank them for the wonderful contributions they've made to the province of Ontario.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker's gallery the family of René Piché, the member for Cochrane during the 32nd Parliament. Please join me in welcoming today his wife, Olga Piché; Louise Stevens, his daughter, and her husband, Frank, and their children, Jamie Sheremeta, Melissa Sheremeta, Dean Sheremeta, Renée Sheremeta and Jessica Piché; and also Robert Piché, his son, with his wife, Kathy.

They are here today as we pay tribute to René Piché's service to the Legislative Assembly and the citizens of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park to the family.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This week is Education Week across the province of Ontario, and I will be introducing a private member's bill this afternoon designated to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional learning skills and work habits.

Let me explain. In an age where we have BlackBerrys, iPhones and iPads, information is virtually at our fingertips. It is no longer enough for students to simply learn information, facts and figures. We need to prepare our young people for the 21st century with 21st century skills. My bill will recognize students who have achieved and excelled at mastering the learning skills and work habits in the Ontario curriculum.

The 21st Century Skills Award emphasizes qualities such as individual initiative, personal responsibility and collaboration with others. Both educators and employers agree that these skills are necessary for individual and collective success in whatever field students choose in the future in our connected world.

The OECD has been supporting this work since 1997 while the Conference Board of Canada calls these qualities employability skills which are necessary to enter, stay in and progress in the world of work.

But at the heart of this award are our students, our children. We want to recognize their achievements and support them for success, and I trust all of my colleagues will support the bill this afternoon.

I wish to thank Nan Mantle, as well as her son Jacob Mantle; Kelli Cote, who's an educator; and Wilf Grey, a principal in one of the schools in my riding. I know they support this initiative and I want the members here to support it as well.

### HEARN GENERATING STATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The Hearn generating station in my riding is currently slated for demolition. The Hearn

generating station is a significant part of our history here in Toronto and Ontario and has the potential to be turned into a positive benefit to our community. It's an important part of Toronto's waterfront and landscape. In places like the United Kingdom, such sites have been converted into art galleries. It's owned by Ontario Power Generation and leased to Studios of America, who have the right to demolish it.

The Minister of Culture needs to act. He needs to initiate a process to assess and designate the building as a provincial heritage property. A bad lease signed by the government of Ontario should not be rewarded with the right to demolish a major piece of Ontario's heritage.

### PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to share today an important milestone in Parkdale United Church in my riding of Ottawa Centre, which celebrated its 80th anniversary this past Sunday, on May 1, at a special service.

This church has a proud tradition of serving our community. Parkdale United was the driving force in the creation of Ottawa Neighbourhood Services back in 1932 and Ottawa West Community Support in the early 1970s. In addition, their In From the Cold program, which operates from October to March each year, provides hot meals and hospitality for up to 125 vulnerable individuals per week. I was proud to be part of a group of volunteers, just a few weeks ago, for that program.

Parkdale United also has a diverse intercultural congregation, and they're open and welcoming to all people. Each year, they also embrace this diversity through their annual Celebrating Our Cultures, where the congregation comes together to experience and learn the cultures, stories and history of their diverse community.

The church is also home to the Parkdale United Church Orchestra, the oldest continuous symphony orchestra in the city of Ottawa.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize some of the great people at Parkdale United Church: Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey, who is truly a community leader in Ottawa; Evelyn Andrews of the church council; Melodee Lovering, youth and children's minister; Barbara Faught, pastoral care; Troy Cross, the music director; Jennifer Reid, the office administrator; and Khan Chao, the caretaker.

Congratulations to the Parkdale United Church for your service to our great community. Thank you very much.

### WINE INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to rise today to celebrate the bicentennial of the Ontario wine industry.

It is generally accepted that the father of Ontario's wine industry is Johann Schiller. In 1811, Schiller began making wine in what later became Cooksville, selling it to his friends and neighbours. A winery was later established on the same site. In 1867, Justin De Courtenay



took Ontario wine to the Paris Exposition from the first estate winery, Vin Villa on Pelee Island.

From these beginnings, the Ontario wine industry has grown and flourished. Our wines are internationally recognized for their quality. There are now more than 100 wineries in Ontario and about 6,000 people are employed in the wine and grape industry. The industry makes a significant contribution to our economy, to our agriculture and to tourism.

This evening we will be celebrating this milestone, and I want to thank the wineries who are here from Niagara, Pelee, the Lake Erie north shore and Prince Edward county. I also want to thank Jim Warren for his work on this project.

In this bicentennial year, I encourage all restaurants to carry a good selection of quality Ontario wines. I invite Ontarians to visit our wineries and wine regions. I encourage everyone to celebrate this milestone with a glass of great Ontario VQA wine.

1510

### PENSION REFORM

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** People today are living longer, but they're retiring earlier. The baby boomers are also retiring, but the following generations are getting smaller. Populations are aging and there is a rising tide in the labour force of female participation and changing family structures. There are more people over the age of 65 than under the age of five.

What does this mean to the future of Canada's retirement income system, and where is it headed? Defined benefit plans have been hit by the perfect storm, and defined contribution plans are inadequate. The 2005 World Bank report said that retirement systems should be aligned with socioeconomic changes. Currently, we use RRSPs, but the approach is underutilized for those who are lower-income Canadians.

Today, although we are moving ahead both federally and provincially, we're working together, establishing a working group. There are a number of outstanding issues, primarily the CPP.

This evening we are going to ask the question: How big a priority is pension reform, and can we continue with what we've got? Patrick Longhurst, a pension expert, will discuss these issues at the Etobicoke Civic Centre. We need to understand what those options are, we need to know what is being discussed and we need to know where we're going and what we're going to do as we deal with an aging population and very few funds to support it.

### TEACHERS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of my PC leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus to welcome members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to Queen's Park. ETFO members,

who work in 2,600 schools throughout Ontario, provide outstanding education and support to our students.

As a parent, I know that elementary teachers can have a profoundly positive impact on a young mind. Our teachers inspire, they lead through positive example, and they provide our youth with the opportunity to reach their potential. Every education system is only as strong as the people it has leading in the classroom. Teachers are the backbone of our strong education system. Today in Ontario, our teachers are classroom and community leaders; they're role models, friends, guidance counsellors and guardians.

Our party is committed to supporting our teachers and support workers in every possible way. We are firmly committed to strengthening our public education system for our students.

In closing, I'd like to welcome the ETFO organization to Queen's Park and thank every teacher and support worker in Ontario for their commitment to providing brighter futures to Ontario's youth. Let us always remember to put our students first.

### SILFAB ONTARIO

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On April 18, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and I had the opportunity of attending the grand opening of the Silfab Ontario solar panel manufacturing plant in my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. Silfab will immediately bring 71 jobs to the Mississauga community and will employ up to 200 once at its full capacity.

The Italy-based company Silfab was attracted to Ontario by the province's vibrant clean and green energy economy, and has made Mississauga the location of their first and only plant in North America. As our economy continues to turn the corner, Silfab's investment is just the latest endorsement of Ontario's strength as a global leader in clean and green energy.

This is terrific news for Mississauga families and Ontario's growing clean and green energy sector. This government is helping Mississauga to turn the corner and help grow our local economy, create good jobs and protect our environment.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** The 2011 budget contained great news for Ontario farmers. This government introduced the most significant made-in-Ontario agriculture program in 25 years. We made a commitment to make permanent the risk management program for the grain and oilseeds sector and to implement new risk management programs for Ontario's cattle, hog, veal and sheep sectors. In addition, we committed to a self-directed risk management program for the fruit and vegetable sectors.

The farmers in Chatham-Kent Essex know they are being heard. They said they needed predictable, stable and bankable funding, and we are delivering just that. Farmers can now count on stable financial support that

will help protect family farms and ensure that Ontarians continue to enjoy local healthy food.

The risk management plan is about building a foundation for a strong and prosperous agricultural food industry. Ontario's agricultural food industry contributes \$30 billion to the province's economy every year and provides over 700,000 jobs.

Agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility. I encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector.

#### SUPPORT STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I rise in the House today to commemorate Support Staff Appreciation Day as part of Education Week. Support Staff Appreciation Day was introduced over a decade ago by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation to recognize the invaluable contribution that support staff like secretaries, custodians, technicians and educational assistants make in helping our students achieve their potential. My own daughter Amanda is an educational assistant in the developmental services classroom at Oakridge Secondary in London.

It is essential to have the collaboration of everyone in the education community to build a better future for our children. This is demonstrated every day by the hard work and dedication of support staff working alongside our educators in schools to help foster a positive and supportive learning environment for students.

Our schools are much more than buildings, and we understand that it takes a collaborative approach, including the integral role of support staff, for students to succeed and learn. Today we stand with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the broader education community to recognize support staff appreciation across Ontario.

Happy Support Staff Appreciation Day, Amanda.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / *Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur*

*la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### BIG A AMUSEMENTS LTD. ACT, 2011

Mr. Delaney moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr47, An Act to revive Big A Amusements Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

##### TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS AWARD ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE PRIX COMPÉTENCES POUR LE 21<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 190, An Act to create the Twenty-First Century Skills Award for school pupils / *Projet de loi 190, Loi créant le Prix Compétences pour le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle pour les élèves.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's very appropriate to introduce this in Education Week, and that is the intent. The bill allows the Minister of Education to confer an award known as the Twenty-First Century Skills Award to no more than one elementary school pupil and one secondary school pupil for each school board if, in the minister's opinion, a recipient has demonstrated the following skills in relation to schoolwork during the current school year: responsibility, organization, ability to work independently, collaboration, initiative, self-regulation and, if the pupil is enrolled in a French-language instruction unit, ability in oral French. The minister can also pay a bursary to a recipient of the award out of the ministry's budget.

I'd also like to thank Nan Mantle, Kelli Cote and Wilf Grey, all educators who have reviewed this bill. I appreciate their response.



## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 14 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### RENÉ PICHE

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late René Piché.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I rise on behalf of New Democrats and our leader, Andrea Horwath, in regard to René Piché, a person who was well known to myself and many people who come from the constituency in which I reside.

René was quite a colourful individual; that would be a good way of putting it. He was person who had a lot of vision when it came to what needed to be done in northern Ontario and somebody who said, "You know what? It ain't going to happen if I sit at home and wait for it to happen on its own," and decided at a very young age that you had to be active in democracy in order to be able to make things happen.

He first came to Kapuskasing some years ago, I believe back in the 1940s, from Cache Bay, just out of Sturgeon Falls. He went to Kapuskasing to find a job and thought he was going to find his success in life working in a paper mill. He decided, as did many others, that he didn't want to do that. He wanted to run his own businesses and became a very successful business person in the Kapuskasing area.

He started up a number of businesses, but the one that I think most people remember and hold close to their hearts is the Northern Times, which even writes about me every now and then. Can you imagine? The Northern Times was started by René and became quite a leader when it came to papers in northeastern Ontario. Eventually, he started up Norweb, which was a printing company that printed virtually every weekly paper in northeastern Ontario and, I would venture, a whole bunch more outside of the northeast.

In all of that time, he understood that you had to give back to your community, so he became involved in municipal politics, ran and was eventually elected as mayor. When he was mayor, he started up something called the mayors action group. We now know it as the

Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, but it was novel for the time. I remember that as a young man growing up, at that time in my 30s or 20s—whatever it was—you'd hear about this mayors action group, and it was always synonymous with René Piché.

René was the chair of that organization for many years and, along with other municipal councillors from across the northeast, advocated for such things that were very—when you think about it, back then it was just like advocating for things like a Ministry of Northern Development and Mines as we know it today, back then the Ministry of Northern Affairs. René was the guy who headed up that whole push to have that ministry within the government of Ontario so that northerners could have their own ministry to deal with those issues that are so unique to northern Ontario.

He was also very instrumental, through this organization, along with others, in getting started the air ambulance service we know as Ornge today. It wasn't Ornge back then; it was air ambulance run by the ministry. But it became quite a success in being able to shuttle patients from hospital to hospital when it came to air transfer for critical transportation of patients in need.

As well—you wouldn't know this—but with regard to the island airport in Toronto, the mayors action group in northern Ontario said, "We need to have a hub so we can get close to the centre of Toronto," and advocated on behalf of southerners in order to develop the island airport. Quite frankly, that was done by René Piché and a number of mayors in northern Ontario because we understood that we need to have good communication, good transportation between the north and the south. Pearson has its place, but the island airport had a very special place when it came to coming down here. As a private pilot, I want to say I thank you because it's a great place to land—10 minutes from work and here you are.

In that whole time as mayor, he understood something. I've got to say to my good friends the Conservatives: He headed the Common Sense Revolution before there was ever a Common Sense Revolution. René headed up a number of initiatives in the town of Kapuskasing. I don't have the time to go through them, but it was about trying to bring the common sense approach to government that later was taken by the Conservatives under one by the name of Michael Harris. René had been there a long time before. I always wondered, did René have discussions with Michael back then, and is that where that all came from? I don't know. But it was known in Kapuskasing that René was a no-nonsense kind of guy. You either agreed with him strongly or you disagreed with him strongly, but one thing was sure: René was going to get it done. There are people to this day who see him as one of the most effective mayors we've had in Kapuskasing. There are others who view it differently because they may have been on the opposite side of a fight.

Something that a lot of people don't know: He was a professional firefighter for five years. I didn't realize that until I read his bio. I'm not going to go through the story,



but he had lots of dealings with the fire department. I think a lot of people may not have appreciated that he was a firefighter at one time.

He then ran successfully for Parliament, was elected and came here to the Legislature. He was here for about five years, if I remember correctly. He was one of those who got caught in the sweep as the Conservatives were on the way out and the Liberals on their way in with that large majority. He was one of the people who got caught up in that sweep. But René understood that elected office is only part of what you do in order to serve your community. He was active as a member of this assembly. He was the whip for the government caucus. That would have been a lot of fun in a minority Parliament, let me tell you. He was also the minister of northern transportation. It was one of those ministries that was created by Mr. Miller in the dying days of the Conservative government, and it was an understanding that transportation in northern Ontario was different. He was the first and probably the only minister of northern transportation.

I know I'm a little bit over, but I just want to end by saying a couple of things that have to be said. After he was defeated in 1990, we went through, in Kapuskasing, an epic situation where Kapuskasing was going to lose basically its only employer in town, Kimberly-Clark. We were going to go from three or four paper machines down to one machine. The community, the workers and everybody said, "That's not going to happen. That's not on. We need to find some way to save this mill." The workers and the community came up with the idea of worker ownership as an idea to be able to save that mill, where the workers would buy the mill and they would run the mill as either complete owners or part owners of that mill. René started up a citizens' coalition, the citizens group, which is basically the representatives of small business, individuals and others who weren't working at the mill in order to do the kind of work that had to be done to get the government of the day—yes, the NDP government—to do worker ownership.

I've got to tell the story. Here we are, there's a plan that was put forward for worker ownership. It was quite rich. I'm not going to get into all of the details. One Bob Rae, the former leader of the New Democrats, who was Premier at the time, said no to the deal. He said, "No, we're not going to move on this worker ownership deal at present," because he thought at the time that it wasn't the deal that we needed at the end. René said, "Well, I'm not going to take that for granted." He and all the other citizens, leaders of the union and others said, "Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Len Wood, get up here. We're going to meet with you guys in Kapuskasing and we're going to tell you why you've got to do this." We show up to the meeting at the civic centre, and there was this great big protest at The Circle in Kapuskasing, where virtually every person who lived in the Kapuskasing area showed up. René and the gang had us all come into the civic centre, and at that particular meeting announced to us that the highway was being closed in and out of the municipality and that we had to change our minds.

So I give it to René. I don't know if it was his idea, but I'll tell you, it was quite effective. We had to negotiate our way out of Kapuskasing, and eventually we came down and finally convinced Bob Rae that he should get off his Liberal ideas and get onto NDP ideas and, in fact, do the worker ownership, which was eventually done. The worker ownership turned out to be a great success story, not only for Kapuskasing but I think for all of Ontario. Today, we still have a mill in Kapuskasing because of the work of René, Len Wood, Shelley Martel and a whole bunch of other people who were involved, but René was certainly a big part of that.

I think as citizens of the province, we only wish that we had more citizens in our province who—and, yes, I'll admit it: René was a Conservative, and on a lot of things I didn't agree with him, but he understood the idea of civic duty. And that is the issue: that you have people who are prepared to continue serving and do what they can even though they're not in elected office. I think my hat goes off to them.

1530

To the family: I know his widow is here, and I know a lot of the family—I can't see their faces up there, but I saw you a little while ago when I came in. I just want to say to you, thank you very much for having lent us your father, your husband and your grandfather. On behalf of the people of Kapuskasing and area and as the member for Timmins-James Bay, Andrea Horwath, New Democrats and all members of the assembly, we want to say thank you for having lent us your father. He certainly was a true leader in many ways.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I join with my colleagues in welcoming the family of René Piché here today. I want to welcome his wife, Olga, whom I just had the opportunity to meet; his daughter Louise and son Robert; and their respective spouses, Frank and Kathy. We have some grandchildren as well, I believe: Jamie, Melissa, Dean, Renée with a double "e" and Jessica. Thank you all for being here today. We appreciate it. We are delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate the life and service of René Piché, a fellow northerner.

René was born in Cache Bay in May of 1931. Cache Bay used to be just on the edge of my dad's riding back in the 1960s and 1970s, so I know it quite well. He grew up in Sturgeon, which was definitely a part of my dad's riding, so I know Sturgeon Falls well. I know that when he was 17 or 18 he moved to Kapuskasing—Kap, as we call it up in the north—and devoted his life to his community and to serving his community through a variety of ventures. My colleague Mr. Bisson has gone through a number of his business achievements.

He did serve for a long time, from 1971 for 10 years, as the mayor of Kapuskasing. He oversaw the expansion of the city, was a big proponent of economic development, and there was substantial growth in the region during that period of time.

Also, as Mr. Bisson referred to, he was a founding member of the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, an association that continues to this day to lobby on



behalf of northeastern municipalities and has made a great contribution to the awareness of issues in the north. We owe a debt of gratitude to him and to the group of active northern municipal politicians who came together in the 1970s to form that organization, which is now continuing to advocate on behalf of the north.

I think the group's crowning achievement was the development of the air ambulance service in the north, one of the best in North America, which Mr. Bisson also referred to, and which probably led to him getting more involved on a provincial level and throwing his hat in the ring in 1981 when René Brunelle retired after some 23 or 28 years.

Mr. Brunelle, as I recall, because I was a page in the late 1970s, was a very soft-spoken, quiet man. Mr. Piché, I understand, in contrast, was a little more loud and rowdy, shall we say—a good French Canadian from northern Ontario. He was described to me this morning by Sean Conway, who sat in this House for 30-plus years, as incredibly jovial and someone that you always wanted to sit down and have a chat with.

He spent time in the Legislature serving under Bill Davis. He was elevated to cabinet by Frank Miller and was referred to as the minister without portfolio responsible for northern transportation. He also served for a time as chief government whip, which, as I can attest to, is not always the most fun of jobs. Being the House leader, I know that the government whip also has a tough job, and certainly we appreciate the time that he no doubt devoted to those duties.

In 1985, Mr. Piché was defeated by René Fontaine. I just have to pause there because I know René, and I can only imagine the battle of the French Canadian titans in the riding in 1985. I'm sure it was quite the contest—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The debates would be great.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** The debates would have been lots of fun; absolutely. It was referred to in the *Globe and Mail* on May 3, 1985, in the following way: "In the weeks leading up to yesterday's vote, Cochrane North shaped up as one of the province's fiercer contests and true to form, it was neck-and-neck until Liberal René Fontaine pulled ahead by 11%."

"It was a battle of two former mayors in the heavily francophone riding—Mr. Fontaine, the ex-mayor of Hearst, and former Kapuskasing mayor Mr. Piché, minister responsible for northern development." It goes on to talk about the battle that ensued, and I can only imagine what a battle it was. We do have some fierce battles in the north, but we all come together to represent the north.

I know that after his defeat he continued on in the quest to represent the north. He went back to being mayor for a while. He continued in his quest to better the opportunities, as Mr. Bisson described in some detail, for the folks of Kapuskasing. After retiring from politics, he continued in his service to the north by spearheading one final and crucial, important project for his community: the establishment of a regional doctors' office complex, which he chaired and which was opened in 1996 with 12 physicians—no easy feat in northern Ontario and, I'm sure, a lasting legacy for the community.

Monsieur Piché and his wife, Olga, later moved to Ottawa, and, sadly, Monsieur Piché left us on January 22, 2011, after battling cancer for several years, which I'm sure was difficult for his family. He was 79 years of age.

As a fellow northerner, it's always a great opportunity for me to say thank you to my predecessors and to those who have fought hard to represent the north and who have provided a great deal of service to the province and to the people of the north. So to the family today, I just want to say thank you for sharing René Piché with us for those five years. Thank you for his service to public life over 30 years and for all that he did for our northern communities. Thank you, and we're so glad you could be here with us today.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm pleased to join the tributes today for former member of this Legislature René Piché. Tomorrow, René Piché would be turning 80. Happy birthday, René. Unfortunately, we're not going to be there to join him—or maybe fortunately.

I never knew René Piché, but from what I've heard about him over the last couple of weeks, I sure wish I would have known him. He seemed like my kind of guy. He was born on May 5, 1931, in Cache Bay, Ontario. In 1948, he moved to Kapuskasing, where he took a job at the mill for a short period of time. Then he served as a professional firefighter, as my friend from Timmins—James Bay has said, for five years. So to my firefighting friends in the gallery today, one of your colleagues is being honoured today. For five years, he served as a professional firefighter.

In that ensuing time, based on the calendar, he was married to his good wife, Olga, who is here today, for 59 years. Sometime in that period they would have wed. They were blessed with four children, Gerry, Louise, Robert and Donald.

In 1961, as you've heard, he started the weekly newspaper the *Northern Times*, which continued to grow. By the time he got out of the newspaper business in 1998 and sold Norweb, it was basically printing every newspaper in the region. He was an entrepreneur as well as a public servant.

In 1971, he got into politics for the first time, as the mayor of Kapuskasing, and served for 10 years. I always find that when you're doing one of these tributes, there's always that little bit of separation. My father, who served here, at the latter part of his time here—Mr. Piché's time was 1981-85 and my father was here from 1963 to 1987. He also served as a reeve in Barry's Bay—the same idea as a mayor in a smaller community—for 10 years before coming into the Legislature. Mr. Piché served for 10 years as mayor of Kapuskasing. All of the tributes that I've heard laud him as one of the best, most progressive mayors that community ever saw.

As I said, he was elected in 1981, succeeding René Brunelle, who had been the member since 1958 for the riding of Cochrane North. I was able to talk to my colleague Norm Sterling earlier and get some of his recollections of Mr. Piché as a member, and I'm supporting what both my colleagues Mr. Bisson and Ms. Smith



have said about him: He enjoyed this place, he loved this place, he loved being an MPP and he loved the camaraderie.

He was an extremely effective member of this Legislature. I must say, while he was a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus and a member of the Progressive Conservative government, he was essentially a non-partisan. He was here to do the job and serve the people that he represented, and particularly the people from northern Ontario, who, quite frankly, have always needed strong representation to ensure that their message is heard. He was that kind of a member. He was tireless in that regard.

But he did love the social aspects of this job as well. He loved to have some fun, and he had a great sense of humour. I wish I'd had a chance to have looked through some of his Hansard; I'm sure that would have reflected it as well. You know what? If you're not having fun in this place, it's going to grow stale on you pretty quickly. He was one of those people who recognized that and enjoyed his job here to a great degree.

1540

Norm told me that they called him Peach, and a peach he certainly was.

In 1985, unfortunately, he lost his seat. As Mr. Bisson said, as the Progressive Conservative dynasty of 42 years was coming to an end, he was a victim of that time. Timing is everything in politics. René lost his seat in 1985. He attempted to win it back in 1990, but do you remember what happened in 1990? That was when the NDP swept the province. So, unfortunately, we only got to have him as a representative in this House for that short period of time, 1981 to 1985, because of circumstances and timing in politics—as we know, or anybody who has served in this House knows. It would have been wonderful to have had him here longer.

Some of the things that were said about René when he passed away on January 22 of this year tell you a little bit about how revered he was in the north by those people who worked closely with him and those people who were affected by the work that came before them. Vic Power, a Timmins mayor, commented that Piché was influential in the creation of the Ontario government's own northern Ontario air service. "He was the one who really got norOntair going, which was to our perspective a very successful ... airline for northern Ontario," said Power.

Matt Rukavina, Kapuskasing's former chief administrative officer, commented, "We've lost the biggest supporter the North ever had," adding that his instrumental role in forming the Northeastern Ontario Mayors Action Group gave northern Ontario the voice in Queen's Park that it was always lacking and cemented the idea that transportation was a key factor for northern prosperity.

As has been mentioned earlier, he became the minister of northern transportation. That was something that meant so much to him: to improve the ability of northerners to move within their own district. Consequently, his government created a portfolio that was tailor-made for Mr. Piché: minister of northern transportation.

I know that the clock is ticking and we have limited time. Unfortunately, that's the situation. We could go on for a great deal of time about his accomplishments both in and outside of the political arena.

I want to end by thanking his family for allowing him to serve for those years. As a son of a former member, I recognize the sacrifice that families make. Your sacrifice was to the benefit of all of the citizens of the area that he served and, indeed, particularly to northern Ontarians, but to all Ontarians who were able to benefit from his efforts and his dedication here for his time in this House—and as I say, beyond that, because even after he left here in 1985, he continued to work to improve opportunities and transportation and services in the north.

So I say to you, thank you very much for your commitment to his career. On behalf of all members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, thank you very much for his dedication and your sacrifice.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I want to thank the members for their comments. A copy of Hansard will be sent to the family so that you will have that to view today's events.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As Ontarians, we're blessed to live in one of the most diverse societies in the world, a society whose citizens show mutual respect for our varied backgrounds and experiences, and it is in that spirit that I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the month of May as Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

In a province as diverse as Ontario, our Asian and South Asian communities are themselves especially diverse. Between them, the Asian and South Asian communities represent people who trace their roots to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, several African nations, and the Caribbean and South America, among others. And the people who make up Ontario's incredibly vibrant Asian and South Asian communities speak many languages, practise many religions and represent many different ethnicities. In some cases their histories in Ontario and in Canada extend back many, many generations, even into the 1800s. Indeed, May 5 also marks South Asian Arrival Day, commemorating the first arrivals from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas that day in 1838.

Whether their histories stretch back over a century or more recently, the origins and stories of the Asian and South Asian communities—their struggles and their triumphs—are all unique, and those struggles and those triumphs make us who we are. All Ontarians, no matter where we trace our origins, have contributed so much to



the vibrant and resilient society that we are today. Our communities have distinct cultural backgrounds, but together their contributions define Ontario's rich identity.

Today our Asian and South Asian communities number almost two million individuals. That's nearly one in six Ontarians. But beyond their numbers, their contributions to our province in business, science, culture, civic life and more are immeasurable. The Asian and South Asian communities have helped to transform Ontario into a truly global force. Our ability to strengthen our economic ties with nations such as China, Japan, India and Pakistan is due in large part to a diverse and internationally connected population.

One connection that particularly touches Ontarians of Indian descent is that 2011 is also the Year of India in Canada. That's of special significance to our province, because Ontario is home, as we all know, to a large and thriving Indian community. Today in Ontario, India's cultural imprint can be found throughout our province. Thousands of visitors have flocked to the Art Gallery of Ontario to view a special exhibition called Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts. Next month, Toronto will play host to the International Indian Film Academy Awards, a three-day celebration of South Asian film and culture. Events like these showcase Ontario as a welcoming and inclusive society, a vibrant society that is open to the world.

Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month is a time when we acknowledge the long and lively histories of these communities. Together we honour their legacies and reflect on their achievements. Of course, we do this formally in May, but the contributions of the Asian and South Asian populations are something that we value every day of the year.

It was the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Canada's first Asian Canadian Governor General, who once said, "At our best, we are in constant search of something beyond, of ... dreams and destinies that we reach toward, together." I encourage my colleagues and all Ontarians to celebrate with their neighbours, their friends and families the contributions Asian and South Asian communities have made to our social, cultural and economic well-being. They are proof that a diverse society of people from around the world can live and work together in harmony to achieve our individual dreams and our shared aspirations for a stronger, more vibrant and more prosperous Ontario.

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

### SEMAINE DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to rise to acknowledge Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario, observed in the first full week of May each year.

J'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole à l'occasion de la Semaine de la santé mentale des enfants, qui a lieu chaque année au cours de la première semaine complète du mois de mai.

1550

I'm pleased to see fellow members in this House wearing the green ribbons distributed by Children's Mental Health Ontario to celebrate this important week.

Approximately one in five Ontario children and youth has a mental health challenge. That's about 500,000 kids. These young people are dealing with issues that range from anxiety and depression to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and schizophrenia. While there has been encouraging progress made towards demystifying mental health issues, the stigma associated with mental illness remains. That's why Children's Mental Health Week has two key roles: to decrease the stigma that young people feel, and to increase overall awareness of mental health.

We all need to talk about this important issue in our families, in our communities and across the province. Since becoming Minister of Children and Youth Services, parents have told me that the road is often difficult and lonely for children dealing with mental health issues. Like any parent, these parents have hopes and dreams for their kids, and they all want them to be the best that they can be.

This government shares these aspirations, and we demonstrated that in our 2011 budget. Starting this year, we will be making significant new investments in children's mental health, growing to \$93 million a year in 2013-14.

Notre gouvernement partage ces aspirations, et notre budget 2011 traduit cet engagement.

We're starting with children and youth because we know that many forms of serious mental illness begin during childhood and adolescence. In fact, 70% of mental health and addictions issues begin early in life. We've heard from families, providers and experts about the importance of early identification and intervention. This was echoed in the advice we received from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions. We've listened carefully to this advice, and we will work to strengthen community-based services and create a more integrated mental health system and build capacity in the education system to support children and their families.

We know that if we identify mental illness and intervene early, we can get most kids back on track for success. We also know that there is work to do to build a more efficient, effective and accountable mental health system, and we will make immediate enhancements to children's services and produce measurable results in the short term, while laying the foundation for this broad system reform. We will continue to build on the excellent work being done by community agencies and health care professionals to create a mental health system that delivers what children and youth need when they need it, as close to home as possible.

Our government has made good progress in the areas of children's mental health, and we will continue to do more.



As former UNICEF director Carol Bellamy said, “In serving the best interests of children, we will serve the best interests of all humanity.”

À l’occasion de la Semaine de la santé mentale des enfants, je tiens à réaffirmer l’engagement de notre gouvernement à continuer à travailler avec nos partenaires dévoués en vue de soutenir les jeunes ayant des problèmes de santé mentale et leurs familles.

In recognition of Children’s Mental Health Week, I want to reaffirm our government’s commitment to working with our dedicated partners to support young people with mental health challenges and their families.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Responses?

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I’m very pleased today to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus in celebration of Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

In 2001, the Progressive Conservative government of the day supported the bill to proclaim May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day. Raminder Gill was my colleague at the time. He was the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. He introduced this legislation as a private member’s bill, and it passed third reading on December 13, 2001. We’re very proud of that legislation, which enshrined in law the recognition of our South Asian community here in the province of Ontario. The bill passed, I should add, with the unanimous support of this House.

In the same spirit of non-partisanship, I was very proud to work with the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex in 2008, becoming the first MPPs of different parties to co-sponsor a bill and see it passed into law. When the standing orders were changed to allow for co-sponsored bills, I saw it as an opportunity to work together across party lines. As I said, our bill recognizing Emancipation Day in Ontario was passed by this House. It just goes to show that you can do almost anything if you’re prepared to share the credit.

But today we credit Canadians of South Asian and Asian backgrounds who have made—and continue to make—major contributions to our province and our country. For a brief summary of just a few of those contributions throughout our province’s history, I want to read from the original bill passed here in 2001. It states the following:

“South Asian immigrants began arriving in Ontario at the start of the 20th century. Working primarily in the sawmill industry, South Asian immigrants settled in various parts of the province. For South Asians, the month of May has been a time of celebration and commemoration of their arrival from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas beginning on May 5, 1838.

“While most South Asians came to our country from India, many others came to Ontario from such places as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya, South

Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Today, South Asians make up a significant proportion of Ontario’s populations and are proud to draw upon their heritage and traditions, contributing to many aspects of culture, commerce and public service across this province.”

Mr. Speaker, I couldn’t have said it better. On behalf of the leader of the official opposition and the Ontario PC caucus, I want to offer my very best wishes to all Asian Canadians in this time of celebration.

#### CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I am pleased to rise today, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize Children’s Mental Health Week.

As part of Children’s Mental Health Week, I had the opportunity to join the Minding Our Dufferin Youth conference on youth mental health issues this morning in the riding of Dufferin–Caledon. This is a great example of how different organizations in a community can collaborate for a single goal: to help youth with developmental, mental, health and addiction challenges.

In my community, organizations representing the legal, justice, children’s mental health, housing, education, addiction, policing and health sectors all joined together this morning to coordinate this outstanding conference. I congratulate them for their efforts.

As many of you are aware, I was on the select committee which studied mental health and addictions across Ontario. We are now into day 57 of the commitment that was made to table a mental health and addictions plan within 60 days. I have to remind my colleagues across the floor that we are all waiting for that plan to be tabled, as was voted on and endorsed by a PC opposition day motion.

I do acknowledge that there was a single line in the budget that talked about investing in children and youth’s mental health, but wouldn’t today, as we mark Children’s Mental Health Week, have been a wonderful opportunity to give us even one example of where that budget announcement investment is going to take place? We are now, I believe, six weeks past the budget and we are still waiting for any kind of announcement on where the investments are going to take place, where they will happen, which organizations will benefit from them. It would have been a beautiful opportunity this afternoon as we mark Children’s Mental Health Week to talk about that.

Unfortunately, we haven’t seen that from the minister. We are still waiting. The families are still waiting. Quite frankly, I think the families have waited too long. We need to see some actual action and initiative now.

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I am rising to respond to both of the ministerial statements. Unfortunately, I only have five minutes to do so, so I will do my best.



I rise on behalf of New Democrats, first and foremost, in honour of Asian and South Asian Heritage Month. This month, as we celebrate our nation's Asian and South Asian communities, we must pledge to remember the lessons learned from their perseverance and triumph throughout some very ugly chapters of our history as Canadians and the role they have played in building communities in Canada from the earliest days of our nation to the present day.

The Asian and South Asian experience in Canada sheds light on some of the more troubling aspects of our history. From the Chinese head tax to Komagata Maru or the internment of Japanese Canadians, the journey from then to now has been one marked by hardship and injustice.

1600

To truly demonstrate that we have learned from our past, we must do more than just set a month aside; we must work diligently to remove barriers that force many Canadians to overcome unnecessary adversity in order to enrich the province and country we are all proud to call home. Eliminating discrimination and racism requires real action. We have to increase access to tools like affordable child care, housing and post-secondary education.

The enduring lesson of the Asian and South Asian experience is the triumph of hope and hard work in spite of daunting obstacles. Ontario's New Democrats honour the sacrifice of the early Asian and South Asian Canadians and their descendants with a renewed commitment to build a province that brings out the best in all of its citizens.

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In response now to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: The children's mental health sector has struggled for many, many years under this government without adequate resources; 25% of Ontario's children are affected by mental illness.

I want to first of all commend the families, parents, community members and organizations who have advocated long and hard for sustainable funding to this sector. I credit them and those who work in the field for getting the government to respond in any way at all to this very important issue.

The time for action is immediate. Liberal funding announcements are fine, provided that they actually translate into direct investments to help those families who have pleaded for supports for so long. Far too often, funding announcements—in fact, any announcements from this government—become fodder for politicking and are dangled in front of people: more promises, promises that never, ever materialize. We fervently hope that this is not one of those occasions where funding decisions are loudly promoted but quietly deferred until after the next election.

There is some reason to doubt the McGuinty government's commitment in this particular situation. On April

14, three Liberal MPPs of the Legislature's all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions voted against Bill 117, the Children's Mental Health Act, a Liberal private member's bill. Bill 117 proposed the committee's foremost recommendation for coordinated services. Liberals unanimously supported it at the committee but voted against it in the Legislature. This flip-flop gives us cause for concern and gives everyone in children's mental health cause for concern. It appears to be a betrayal of the very principles underpinning Ontario's mental health strategy for children and youth. The question is simple: Why did its own members vote against an all-important plank of coordination to ensure that families get timely and equitable access to an integrated and client-directed health system?

New Democrats envision a mental health system that is well coordinated, that is efficient, providing excellent services and programming. Our kids deserve nothing less, yet the most obvious step to achieving this goal was rejected by the McGuinty Liberals less than three weeks ago, and shame on them for that rejection. Equally troubling are the service cuts, the staff layoffs and the program closures that have characterized the first four months of this calendar year. The lack of accountability for these short-sighted decisions is frustrating, to say the least.

My comments today reflect the concerns that I have heard personally from parents, service providers and children and youth workers across the province. They continue to urge me to press the McGuinty government on these points. The sooner we step up and address the need for timely treatment of mental illness in children and youth, the more lives—the more futures—we will be saving.

## PETITIONS

### FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the fire protection adviser for the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the united counties of Prescott-Russell retired in 2008; and

"Whereas the position has not been filled as several attempts by management were denied; and

"Whereas, during this same period, positions were filled in other areas of the province of Ontario, leaving the above-mentioned united counties the only region without a fire protection adviser; and

"Whereas fire departments in these united counties currently have to wait four hours or longer before a fire protection adviser can arrive from another region to assist them;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the fire departments of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and Prescott-Russell ask the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to allow the Office of the Fire Marshal to fill the position of fire protection adviser immediately."

I agree with this and shall sign it and send it to the Clerk's table.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. I have presented this a number of times, but it seems someone is not listening.

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle, and Lakeridge Road in Durham."

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Erica, one of the pages here at Queen's Park.

### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's a pleasure to stand and read this petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would definitely like to thank Diane Wilton of Kildare Court in Mississauga for sending it to me, and also, because I know she's watching, say hello to Andrea at home. It read as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Hamza to carry it for me.

### CAMBRIDGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas in 1998, the Health Services Restructuring Commission ordered a \$62-million expansion at Cambridge Memorial Hospital featuring a new wing, an expanded emergency department and a mental health schedule 1 facility; and

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty, former health minister George Smitherman and Minister John Milloy have all publicly stated that the expansion would proceed; and

"Whereas we are nearing the end of 2010 and the expansion remains stalled;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario commit to including this long-awaited and desperately needed expansion at Cambridge Memorial Hospital in the capital budget that is presently being prepared."

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm pleased to introduce the following petition, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and their grandparents as requested in Bill 22 put forward by MPP Kim Craiton; and

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

1610

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and



"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their ... grandparents."

I am extremely proud to sign my signature in support of this bill.

### TOBACCO CONTROL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many of our youth are encouraged to use tobacco products due to the distribution of cheap cigarettes by organized crime; and

"Whereas, unlike alcohol possession and consumption, the use and possession of cigarettes by young people is not illegal; and

"Whereas legal distributors or sellers of tobacco products in Ontario strictly regulate the sale by ensuring purchasers have identification proving they are of legal age;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario make it illegal for persons under age 19 to purchase or consume tobacco products."

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto and provide it to Viktor.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I, too, have signed the petition.

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

I am giving this to page Caleb. I have affixed my signature to it.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I'm going to sign this petition and send it to the table with Kyla.

### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** This is a petition calling on the Ministry of Transportation to install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road in Orillia.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road in Orillia is a main traffic link for Notre

Dame Catholic School, for the Odas Park fairgrounds and a number of local businesses; and

"Whereas we are concerned about the increased congestion and safety of the travelling public and the transportation of children to Notre Dame Catholic School;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to have the Ministry of Transportation install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road, Orillia."

I'm in favour of this, and I'd like to pass it to Amira to give to the table.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to join with my colleague the hard-working member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex especially in thanking Rob Cole, Jason Lambert and Bonnie Campbell of Glencoe, who have sent me this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I fully support this petition, I have signed it and I'm going to ask page Jasmyne to carry it for me.

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

I affix my signature, as I am in agreement, and give it to it page Rachel.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm pleased to introduce the following petition to the House:

"Whereas special education for the district school board of Niagara has been historically underfunded, we would like the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allocate funding to the DSBN for high-needs special education comparable to the provincial average of \$508.69 per student;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The district school board of Niagara currently has a shortfall in funding for special education of approximately \$1.5 million for 2010-11. School councils across our school board have started this petition to be presented to the Minister of Education.... The district school board of Niagara has the second-lowest funding for special education in the province. This issue not only impacts students with special needs, but all students and educators within our board." They asking the assembly of Ontario to support this application and this petition.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** First, I seek unanimous consent to defer the New Democratic lead by the member for Parkdale-High Park.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do you understand the request? Agreed? Agreed.

1620

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker.

In preparing for this 20 minutes, I just happened to pick up a copy of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, and lo and behold, it fell open to page 744. Sometimes, these things happen. It is, at the very least, serendipity.

It was a good thing I did, because page 744 is an explanation of second reading. What Bosc and O'Brien explained in Canadian parliamentary procedure was that



central to the role of second reading “is a general debate on the principle of a bill.” In the footnote, it says, “Other expressions may be used to refer to the ‘principle’.... Sometimes, the expressions ‘scope’, ‘general scope’ and ‘general objectives’ are used.” I took comfort in that, because sometimes, during the course of a debate, I take a broad, broad, broad approach; sometimes I take a very focused and narrow approach—and I realize that the parliamentary procedure reference here justifies that broader approach, the general scope. What this is about is retirement, retirement of firefighters. I thought, “Well, a broad approach, then, allows me to speak in the context of, amongst other things, retirement.”

I do want to commend the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, who is stickhandling this bill through second reading. He’s complying with—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And the minister is looking for a quorum count over there—he’s complying with the principle, a long-standing principle, that either the minister or the parliamentary assistant to the minister sit through second reading—or third reading, for that matter—even though they may have already finished their contribution to debate. But I understand that the parliamentary assistant will be joining the debate in his own right in relatively short order—as a matter of fact, in around 14, 15 minutes’ time.

What this bill does is fix up a problem that this government created. This government zealously, with great fanfare, announced that it was ending the retirement age in the province of Ontario—he called it the “mandatory” retirement age. I quote the Minister of Community Safety, who just the other day, in commenting on this bill, said that the Liberal government, by eliminating this retirement age, was going to end age discrimination. If 90-year-olds still have to work instead of retiring at the age of 60 or 65, I suppose that’s one peculiar way of putting it. The Minister of Community Safety went one further. He said that eliminating the retirement age meant that Ontarians could now choose when to retire. Please. I like the Minister of Community Safety. He and I have known each other for a long time. It’s like when you have a close relationship with anybody: Sometimes, I know how he’s going to finish his sentences. Sometimes, I know what he’s really thinking, notwithstanding what he’s saying.

“Ontarians can choose when to retire”: Not darned likely, is it, Speaker? How many Ontarians get to choose when to retire? Fewer and fewer Ontarians have a defined benefit pension plan. The ones who do find that those pension plans have been corrupted during the course of years and decades of underfunding, something that a fellow named Bob Rae permitted here in the province of Ontario and that subsequent governments have maintained—big companies, the so-called too-big-to-fail companies, remember? General Motors, Chrysler, the ones that were the beneficiaries of huge taxpayer bailouts. Then, of course, you have the sad issue of the pension benefit guarantee fund that hasn’t been amended

for years, and we’re still stuck at \$1,000 a month, notwithstanding New Democratic Party efforts and private members’ bills as well to raise that to \$2,500 in a government that ignores the plight of workers, like Atlas Steels workers down where I come from, who had a good pension plan—the problem was, it wasn’t funded—and who, after they retired, found their pensions slashed and found themselves reliant on the pension benefits guarantee fund, with a maximum of \$1,000 a month.

I beg to differ with the Minister of Community Safety. I think the government is now realizing some of the mess that it created. We warned them about it—not just New Democrats, but people out there in the community warned this government about all sorts of problems.

The reality is that most people look forward to retirement at a reasonable age so they can still be healthy and fit and so they can do the sort of things they couldn’t do when they were working: so they can maybe take courses, so maybe they can play with their grandkids and take care of those grandkids while mom and dad—because inevitably, in this Ontario, if anybody is working, everybody’s working at two or three jobs, and if there is a mom and dad that are working, both of them are because they can’t afford to survive the escalating hydro rates and Mr. McGuinty’s HST. Or, as my colleague says, they can volunteer. But more and more seniors, people who wanted to be retired, find themselves working, not because they’re eager to go back to that workplace, but because they have no choice. Many find themselves taking minimum wage jobs, jobs that they’re far overqualified for, but jobs that they’re desperate to work at because they need the money, because their savings have been attacked by a recession and by mutual fund operators and investment operators who are more interested in their trailer fees and in their commissions and, as often as not, in churning accounts to generate fees than they are in creating benefits for their principal, their client. That’s that classic tension between principal and agent. The broker has his or her own interests as well; they want to make money. The tension between the broker’s interests and the client’s interests oftentimes results in the client’s interests coming second.

Here we’ve got retirees, seniors who have lost their savings. Mind you, people here at Queen’s Park have a pension. They have a wonderfully creative pension that was designed by Mr. Harris in 1996. It’s called a defined contribution pension plan. Every member of the Legislature voted for it—I was here—Conservative, Liberal, New Democrat. I don’t expect to hear any protests from MPPs, because they do in fact have a pension, unlike a whole lot of workers. Theirs is a defined contribution pension plan. In their wisdom, back in 1996, they decided that it was better to convert to a defined contribution, away from a defined benefit.

In the context of firefighters, the New Democrats made this comment yesterday—I want to be very clear, we don’t expect to spend a whole lot of time debating this bill on second reading. We support the bill. It restores an effective retirement age, a meaningful one, a



relevant one, an appropriate one, for firefighters. It gives them some hope.

As a matter of fact, there was a Human Rights Tribunal decision—Espey and the city of London—which noted, as many other jurisdictions have noted, that firefighters, like so many other workers, though—firefighting is dangerous. The exposure to hazards, to toxins, to chemicals creates a predisposition for any number of diseases, respiratory diseases, cancers. The Human Rights Tribunal here in the province of Ontario said that mandatory retirement for firefighters at age 60 has long been a controversial topic. Issues of health and safety are a primary concern, as is the need to ensure that the firefighters are capable of meeting the demands of suppression fighting. That's carrying the hoses. That's carrying the ladders. That's carrying people. It's climbing up the ladders. It's doing all sorts of heavy—and it's coming to the aid of your sisters and brothers who might have fallen in the course of performing their duties.

1630

I was thinking about my own retirement this afternoon, and I'm not talking about anything imminent. But, of course, Wednesday here is cabinet day, and if you're not in cabinet—and in case anybody was under any misapprehensions, I'm not. It has been a long time since I was; a long time. We have this huge gap on Wednesdays here at Queen's Park, because that's when cabinet meets. The Legislature sits in the morning from 9 and then question period at 10:30, but then there's this huge break from noon till 3 o'clock.

When it's cold and miserable outside, you go downstairs to the cafeteria and have a coffee and a grilled cheese sandwich or whatever it is. But on a day like this, when it's a little cool but very nice and bright and sunny, I like going out for a little bit of a walk. I was thinking about retirement. I said, "What a delightful thing this is, to be able to go out for a little walk." I went up north on Yonge Street. I went to see my friends at the Cookbook Store, over at the intersection of Yonge and Yorkville.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** A good store.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Great staff; wonderful people. I've known them for years—the Cookbook Store, Canada's food and wine bookstore, at 850 Yonge Street. They've got a website, cook-book.com, which is a great website. This may surprise you, but I've been buying cookbooks from them for years, just like I've been buying Delta and Porter-Cable power tools for years.

The cookbooks I collect—there are hundreds of them; well into several hundred of them by now. Just like the Porter-Cable hand tools, the table saw and the radial arm saw in the basement, they're pristine because I figure that someday I'll be able to use the power tools; someday I'll be able to go to those cookbooks and cook some stuff up.

I know I can handle the power tools a little bit. I'm not great; I'm no Bob Vila. I'm sure I can handle the cooking, and I'm no Emeril Lagasse. But the Cookbook Store is a great store on Yonge and Yorkville. I bought a goat meat cookbook today, which I thought was rather neat because I like buying rustic or peculiar stuff.

In any event, in case I don't retire in time and there's a lawn sale, come on down; there are going to be all sorts of power tools and all sorts of cookbooks, amongst other things, down on Bald Street there in Welland.

See, we don't do hard work here. We work long hours sometimes. We work on weekends; that's true. The work of a politician takes a toll on families. People who are trying to raise little kids as politicians are under special pressures. Those kids miss out. The most serious physical risk here is the occasional paper cut or bruised ego. We don't have a big roster of workers' comp claims coming out of Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** A BlackBerry falls on your toes.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** As the member says, although I wish to goodness they didn't allow BlackBerrys in the chamber because it would improve the quality of debate. People wouldn't be playing with their BlackBerrys; they'd be focusing on what's being said in the chamber and perhaps preparing their responses, I say to the minister.

It's important that this bill go to committee. It's very important that this bill not die in some prorogation. I know that the government says it's going to sit through to the calendar date of June 2, but after Monday, anything could happen.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Which Monday?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yesterday. You don't want to recall it. I understand, I say to the Minister of Agriculture. She wishes she had slept through Monday.

So I say to you, anything can happen here in the chamber, in this Legislature, prior to June 2. It would be a darned shame if the House prorogued before June 2 and this bill got sucked up into that black hole of prorogued bills. It would be a shame if the legislative agenda were such that this bill didn't get to third reading, which is why the New Democrats said yesterday and we're saying again today that we don't want to prolong the second reading debate. I've been speaking to it. I'll be finished in four and a half minutes. Ms. DiNovo, the member from Parkdale-High Park, will speak to it when the bill is next called. We'll then not be calling any more speakers.

We expect the committee hearings to be sufficiently long to accommodate all those people who want to make comments, including the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I suspect that AMO will want to say things. I suspect that the fire chiefs of Ontario will want to say things. There may be others. But I also suspect that they can be accommodated in the course of one or two days maximum, and then get this bill back in here for third reading and get it passed, because firefighters have been calling for this ever since that foolhardy move on the part of the McGuinty Liberal government that eliminated the retirement age for so many working women and men here in the province of Ontario.

The real motivation for eliminating—I remember some of the arguments: "The dignity of work." No, I call it the dignity of having enough income so that you can do the sorts of things you want to do with your wife or your husband or your spouse or your family or your friends or



your neighbours, so that you can pursue those things that human beings should be able to pursue as part of leisure time and as part of creating a healthier and stronger community and quality of life.

Once again, it's easy for us to talk about the dignity of work. We don't work very hard physically, and, quite frankly, there is no test of any sort that an MPP has to pass once they're elected to sit in this chamber, neither physical—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, no. The test is neither physical nor is it any sort of, "Can you add, multiply, divide, read"—amongst other things—"spell?" So here we are, and with very comfortable incomes, and it's easy enough for us to talk about it. Why would you people not want to work until you're 100? Look, you can have leather-upholstered chairs and sit on them, and you can heckle and interrupt other speakers. You can do your BlackBerry and do your mail or look at—Lord knows what people are looking at on those BlackBerrys, like the Minister of Northern Development.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I am listening.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** He can do two things.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, no. As a matter of fact, the research on neuroscience says that you can't do two things at a time. You merely think you can, but what you do is you flip back and forth. It's like reading and watching television or reading and listening to music. You can't do two things at a time. As a matter of fact, the exercise to prove that is to take two people together in a room in front of you, each reading from a different text simultaneously—I've done this; this is an experiment—and see if you can understand anything of what anybody is saying. This is only two people.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Cookbooks?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Cookbooks, if you wish. And that's if you want to illustrate how people can't do two things at one time, which is why you can't use your cellphone while you're driving, because you can't do two things at one time. Okay? It's not like chewing gum and walking, *inter alia*.

So I'm going to wrap this up in around a minute and 20 seconds. I wish I hadn't accommodated my dear friend and colleague the member from Parkdale-High Park by giving her the hour that I would have had otherwise, because I found this 20 minutes to be rather useful as a warm-up.

But I commend the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association for their tenacity, for dealing with this issue on a regular basis. They've been dogged in pursuing it in their lobby days and in contacts with individual members. I know down where I come from—I mention it all the time—Mike Fowler, who is the president of the association down there and a good friend and great firefighter, doesn't fail to mention this to me every time I see him, whether it's over at the King Street fire hall or whether it's in the backyard of my house, or the side patio more often, or whether it's as we're passing each other at the market square on Saturday morning—where

I'll be, by the way, on Saturday morning with Malcolm Allen, the newly re-elected New Democrat MP for the riding of Welland.

I look forward to seeing what people have to say in committee. I trust that if the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association seeks amendments that they say will better impact on them, there will be support for those amendments. I know there certainly will be coming from the New Democratic Party.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

1640

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's always a pleasure to stand up and speak after the member from Welland has gone up and always manages to get back to the subject, and it's always entertaining.

I would like to express our deepest gratitude and respect for the men and women who keep our families and homes safe, and who do so with great selflessness, professionalism and dedication. My father was a firefighter in the city of Winnipeg for 36 years, so I grew up in a firefighter's home and absolutely understand the challenges of that job. Of course, when they're going into a building, they're always dealing in stressful situations. My father used to describe going to work for 12 or 14 hours as being 12½ hours of waiting and half an hour of hell. You just never knew what you were going to be running into when you got there. We know that it's a very stressful job, arriving on the scene to deal with either an accident or injuries or a fire. They're going into situations in fires carrying a lot of weight, a lot of equipment, and then having to deal with people, rescuing people. It is a very physically demanding job that takes a lot of courage and fortitude to go to.

I believe that going with the retirement age of 60 is the right thing to do. I think if my father had retired at age 60, he'd still be with us today. The fact that we're going to be dealing with this—a lot of the firefighters are in much better physical shape than they were many years ago when my father was on the force. There's a lot more attention paid to it. I'm really pleased to be part of a government that's bringing forward this legislation on behalf of the firefighters of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've had the privilege of speaking on this bill and also listening to the member from Welland, who always brings an interesting perspective on the issue. I'm happy to say that I'm looking forward to our critic, Garfield Dunlop, commenting on it as well.

I had a look at a report here from a human resources law firm, Hicks Morely. It's interesting to make sure we frame this discussion clearly. It says, "The mandatory retirement amendments specifically apply to firefighters who are 'regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.'" This definition will only include firefighters who are unionized under the act, and exclude all volunteer firefighters, whether non-union or unionized under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, 1995. It will likely also



capture platoon chiefs and district chiefs in suppression divisions. However, it will likely exclude those firefighters in the communications divisions, prevention divisions, mechanical divisions and secretarial positions.

"It is not clear whether firefighters in the training divisions will be included or excluded, as they are usually involved in the training of suppression firefighters and therefore, may arguably be considered 'regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.'"

There are some clarifications required in the drafting of the bill, which our leader, Tim Hudak, encourages us to support, this provision of retirement for full-time professional firefighters.

At the same time, in my remarks I want to thank the professional firefighters who are here for the work they do, much like our armed forces. We're all here, I think, from all sides to pay tribute and thank you for the work in putting yourselves and your families at risk. I did mention the three or four fire chiefs and one volunteer who had just retired from my riding—Ron Cordingley.

That's what I think is essential to it all: to listen, give you the opportunity at the table, and some hearings to get this right and define and clarify some of those provisions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to rise in support as well. I think it's an opportunity for us to recognize with a great deal of respect the work that the firefighters do in our communities, and at the same time recognize the hazardous nature of the work that they do.

The mandatory retirement would be for emergency calls. These are the times when there's a great deal of hazard to the work and the physical requirements are significant.

It is recognized that the firefighters in our community are particularly important for a whole host of reasons, and we must at all times remember that it's important to ensure that they feel that they have a safe environment in which to work. One part of that, of course, is the physical requirement, as I indicated, and their capacity to deal with it.

Some 50 of the 75 municipalities already have firefighters with mandatory retirement. This bill, if and when passed, would in fact allow the municipalities, I think, two years to go forward and negotiate mandatory retirement. I think it's a reasonable request, and I think it speaks to the challenges that are being faced by the folks themselves.

I think the other challenge we need to think about is that it really reflects just full-time firefighters; it does not reflect the others. We are also providing for some consistency and uniformity across the requirements for unionized firefighters in this province, and that actually would allow the municipalities themselves to address local cost impacts.

So here we are: an opportunity again to have a good, solid discussion. It will go to committee. It will have the opportunity for people to come forward and provide any particular amendments, if they're required, and at the

same time ensure that hopefully there is speedy passage of this bill in the not-too-distant future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to offer a few comments with respect to the remarks made by the member for Welland.

First of all, I would want to say that I too have been to the Cookbook Store, so I felt that I'd better speak on that to begin with, recognizing how difficult it is to make sure that your credit card stays in your purse—it's almost impossible.

Certainly, one of the problems with cookbooks is the fact that they look so inviting that you can't resist, and so you buy. Then you have to store the cookbook, even if you never get around to making anything in the cookbook. So I share the member's interest in that. I'm not quite sure how he segued between that and retirement, but I will attempt to do that now.

I want to particularly comment on the concern raised by the member with regard to passage of this bill. It's been very clear from all the speakers that there is support for this bill. There's support for moving the bill along into committee. And I think there's concern recognized by the speaker from Welland about the fact that this must be done. We don't want to spend the time now and then leave the bill to die on the order paper. So I would offer that urgency.

I'd finally like to recognize that certainly in my riding, as in everyone else's, we're all very conscious of the kind of commitment people make in being firefighters and recognize the stress that comes with that. Particularly, I'm conscious of the fact that in communities where there is a significant volunteer part to firefighting, there's a tremendous amount of training and time that people spend.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Welland, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I suppose it should be noted here and now, because the issue will arise about this being discriminatory, that the reality is that in law it's *prima facie* discriminatory.

However, there is an issue of a bona fide occupational requirement, and the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case called *Meiorin*, has set out three things that are required to determine—to create—that bona fide occupational requirement with respect to age: (1) that the standard was adopted for a purpose "rationally connected to the performance of the job;" (2) that the standard was adopted "in an honest and good-faith belief that it was necessary to the fulfillment of that legitimate work-related purpose;" and (3) that "the standard is reasonably necessary to the accomplishment of a legitimate work-related purpose." It must be demonstrated as well that it is impossible to accommodate the employee without imposing undue hardship.

It was noted in the city of London 2008 Human Rights Tribunal decision that in the case of firefighters, addressing that third requirement, the issue of "reasonably neces-



sary," "the adjudicator accepted medical evidence that 'death from coronary heart disease is multiple times more likely while performing emergency firefighting duties than while performing non-emergency duties'. Also, in cases of firefighters of an advanced age, there would be increased concerns of safety not only to the firefighter but also to the public and to his or her colleagues should a cardiac event occur when responding to an emergency."

1650

Those are just some of the considerations made by the tribunal. These are the very considerations that dictate that, in this particular instance, this occupational requirement of retirement at age 60 is valid and does not offend the Ontario Human Rights Code, and that addresses that argument that some might want to raise across the province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to start off by welcoming and thanking the members of the various fire departments that are here in the members' gallery as well as in the west gallery to listen to the debate. It's an important debate. I'm going to try to cover some of the areas that are mentioned in the bill that's in front of us today. Hopefully, Bill 181 will be able to pass before this session comes to an end.

I wanted to start this debate by mentioning that there was a resolution that came forward back on March 10 of this year from the MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, Mike Brown, calling on the government to introduce legislation allowing for the mandatory retirement for firefighters at the age of 60. The resolution was debated on that day and was unanimously adopted by this Legislature on that same day, March 10, 2011. The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services responded to that resolution and introduced Bill 181, which makes amendments to part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

The proposed bill that's in front of us today contains provisions to (1) provide for a mandatory retirement age for firefighters at the age of 60; and (2) establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents.

Before I discuss these two provisions, I just want to mention a few words about my own experience dealing with firefighters in my previous capacity as a city councillor, both in the city of Scarborough and later on in the city of Toronto, when the megacity came into being in 1997.

In this legislation before us, we're talking about recognizing and respecting the unique physical and hazardous work that firefighters do to keep the community safe. When I was a city councillor, I had the opportunity to visit a fire station. At that time, the fire station was located on Danforth Avenue in my riding, close to Birchmount Road. The firefighters went and did something that I thought was very unique. They had me put on their uniform or their outfit, which included the gloves, the overall protective covering and the boots, and then they

made me walk. I found out that I was wearing something very, very heavy, onerous and cumbersome, and at times I could barely move forward. Then they took a firefighter's axe and put it into my hands. They said to me, "Now try walking." Again, for a young person who was supposed to be pretty healthy, I found it extremely difficult to move forward. Then I thought to myself, "Imagine going into a building that's on fire and trying to put out that fire using physical energy and either using an axe or directing a hose in that direction." I thought, "It's pretty hard work." I began sweating in the suit. Maybe, at some point in time, technology will allow for something inside the suit. I know that they use it in certain astronaut suits to keep them cool so they don't get overheated, or the body doesn't get overheated.

Anyway, I thought about the fact that people are rushing in—firefighters are rushing into a fire carrying either an axe or pulling a hose into or towards a building, whether it be a residential, an industrial building, a commercial building and so on, and trying to spray out that fire. It's extremely difficult. Then I thought of the worst-case scenario: having to go in there and trying to remove a person who is trapped in a fire. Again, you're carrying that heavy equipment around your body, you're going into a fire and you're trying to pick up another human being and take them out of the building.

Then I began to realize, at that point—again, I'm one of these people who has to see it to believe it, and when I saw it, I began to believe it. I thought, "This is really onerous, hard work. You have to be in good shape to do it." So I thought, "Okay, maybe after so much practice, it gets a bit lighter or easier." Then another question came into my mind, and that question was, what happens when you're going into, let's say, an industrial place or somewhere where they have chemicals with long chains at the end of the molecule? These substances don't just dissipate into oxygen or carbon dioxide or go into the air; they stick around. Not only do people or firefighters end up breathing this in; if the skin is exposed, the possibility exists that that material can get into your body. So you have to make sure as a firefighter that you're well covered and protected, you're able to breathe and that you have a physical ability to go into a hazardous situation, whether it be a home, an industrial place or any other location that catches fire, and put out that fire.

Up until 50 years ago or 80 years ago, fires were put out that were mostly made of wood. The west section of this building was made of wood, and it caught fire—and I don't remember the exact date, but a while back—and it was mostly wood that burned. Nowadays, if you go in the same building or even this chamber, you've got to deal with carpet and all sorts of other elements that can catch on fire that wouldn't burn the same way that wood burns. So we've entered a new era that's only 50 to 100 years old, where plastics are burning—and all sorts of other materials. I don't know what these chairs are made off, but that same material can catch on fire and will burn in a different way than wood and will cause different results to occur.



One other quick story—and I don't want to start telling too many stories because I want to get to the act. Again, my time is limited, but I remember—and I'm sure that many of the firefighters here know this. I'm going to admit some guilt here. When I was young, I used to help my parents, and my parents used to make tomato sauce every year. Many Italian Canadians like to make tomato sauce in the autumn, around September. We would take wood and burn the wood, and on top of the wood we would put a big pot of water and put the jars of tomato sauce on top. One day, I was asked by my parents to keep an eye on the fire. So I was putting wood in for a while, and then my nose began to get really stuffy. So when my parents came back home, they said, "Okay, you can leave now." I had to go and blow my nose. I want to put this in a polite and good way, but basically what came out of my nose was black. I thought to myself, "What is this?" and I got scared. I was a young kid at the time and I thought, "What's coming out of my nose?" It was black, and I thought, "It doesn't look right." It was explained to me later that basically it was the result of the smoke coming from the fire. That's only from one small incident.

Again, firefighters go into much more difficult situations and have to deal with, as I said earlier, much different types of substances that burn differently. Maybe the stuff that would come out of my nose wouldn't be black these days; it would be all sorts of colours or maybe no colour at all, which would perhaps be even more dangerous.

I want to get back to the legislation. I believe in this legislation. As an MPP, I believe that this is important legislation that needs to be approved as soon as possible.

I want to talk, first, about the issue of mandatory retirement. This bill would allow a mandatory retirement age for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties provided that it's not lower than the age of 60 years and is set out in a collective agreement. If a collective agreement does not contain a mandatory retirement age provision, it will be deemed to contain a mandatory requirement provision setting the age of retirement at age 60. The mandatory requirement provisions would not apply to volunteer firefighters or to managers.

Firefighters would not be required to retire if the employer could accommodate them without undue hardship—perhaps assign them to a different function which wouldn't be fire suppression.

The mandatory retirement deeming provision will come into force two years after royal assent of this bill.

Local municipalities can negotiate a retirement age. The Ontario Human Rights Code allows for mandatory retirement if it is found that a workplace environment is a bona fide occupational requirement.

There are approximately 75 collective agreements in this province for full-time firefighters, and the majority—about 56—include mandatory retirement provisions. Actually, about 50 of them require mandatory retirement provisions. What we're proposing to do largely reflects current practice. (1) The average age for firefighters is

57, and few firefighters retire over the age of 60; (2) most firefighters' collective agreements have a mandatory retirement age of 60—approximately two thirds of them do; and (3) approximately 26 municipalities do not have a mandatory retirement age in their collective agreements.

1700

The second part of this bill that I wanted to talk about briefly and address is the duty of fair representation. The proposed bill would establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents and allow firefighter access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board—we call it the OLRB—for duty-of-fair representation complaints. The duty of fair representation provides employees who believe their union is not representing them fairly the right to file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The statutory duty provision, as set out in section 74 of the OLRB act, 1995, does not apply to firefighters under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, so we need to amend that to allow firefighters the right to go to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

It's important to be able to go and represent yourself at that board, because I think the alternative is perhaps a bit too expensive. Either you have to hire a lawyer or appear before the Ontario Human Rights Commission. If you hire a lawyer, there's the whole process of taking your employer to court or arguing with your union and also having to deal with the Human Rights Commission. It sometimes takes longer than one expects before their case is actually heard. So the bill in front of us today allows for firefighters to appear before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. And the labour relations board tends to have a quick or an expedited fashion of dealing with these different matters, and in a more appropriate manner.

I just wanted to reiterate a few more things that the Minister of Labour mentioned yesterday regarding mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters. He basically said the following, and I'll comment on it once I read it:

"Mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters engaged in suppression activities has generally been found by the Human Rights Tribunal to be a bona fide occupational requirement.

"Tribunals have reviewed extensive medical evidence and have generally found that:

"(1) age is a very significant contributor to the risk of cardiac events among firefighters;

"(2) there is a significantly increased risk of cardiac disease around the age of 60; and

"(3) the safety consequences of such an event for a firefighter, the public, and his or her colleagues may be grave."

Bill 181, which since its introduction has received the support of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, acknowledges the concern of increased health and safety risks with age and demonstrates our collective concern for the well-being of Ontario firefighters. We're all aware that firefighters engaged in active firefighting



work under unique conditions. Their work is extremely physical and unpredictable. They contend with hazards such as intense heat, thick smoke and dangerous chemicals.

As I mentioned earlier when I spoke, times have changed, and when they conduct the fire—getting back to my earlier story about visiting a fire station and having an extensive tour—what firefighters have created is a chair, and what happens is that a firefighter will suit up, go into a fire, and to prevent any kind of cardiac arrest or other physical problem, they have a chair where they will sit and be able to recuperate, breathe, drink water. I forget the name of the chair. It was almost like a lawn chair, basically. You sit in that chair, and you're able to recuperate before you go back into that fire.

I actually find it quite brave for a firefighter to be able to go into that situation. We all know what happened with 9/11. The firefighters there rushed to the scene. Were they concerned about their own safety? Yes. Did that stop them from going into the building? No. Did it cause some of them to die? Yes. And the reason is pretty clear: Firefighters do care about the safety of other human beings.

I was watching television last night, and the firefighters were talking about how many of them had died and perished because they were trapped on floors—I think some of them were on the 30th and 40th floors, just after the incidents had happened where the planes had flown into the buildings. They weren't thinking, "You know what? I'm not going to go up there because this building may collapse," or, "I'm not going to go up there because the equipment's too heavy." They carried their heavy equipment, which I think would be similar to the equipment that our firefighters carry, without thinking about their own lives. They were concerned about the lives of the people trapped up higher in the building, and they went up there. And many of them lost their lives doing so.

I know the same thing would happen here. We hear about fires that occur, and then you hear afterwards about firefighters who suffer cardiac arrest or have other inhalation problems. I used to think: "What does that mean, breathing in smoke? How can that harm someone?" But, in fact, many fatalities that occur during fires happen when people, even the occupants of a building, breathe in too much smoke. Smoke is the killer, not the actual fire.

Getting back to the issue of age and retirement at age 60—you do change. I'm different at age 49 than I was at age 29. As much as I'd like to be able to bench-press a certain amount of weight, I can't do it anymore, or if I do it, I feel pain in my joints afterwards. It's just not the same when you get a bit older. That's why my dad and my mom, who are both around the age of 80, complain even more about their aches and pains when they wake up in the morning. We do age. There has to be a cut-off point, and the legislation in front of us presents the age of 60 as being that cut-off point.

It's difficult for a 60-year-old to go into a fire and be able to do it successfully. Yes, people are healthier in

general; people have longer lives, but the body has its limitations, and a 60-year-old going into a fire will be different than a 20-year-old or a 25-year-old. There are a lot of young firefighters who have just come out of their training and are out there doing the work. They have a better ability to go in there and do the job than someone who is 60 or over. It's not an issue of discrimination. It's a measure of common sense and of fact: An older person is going to have a tougher time going into a fire. We are trying to address that concern and make sure that we don't have situations of cardiac arrest or problems of other physical dangers that can occur, especially when a firefighter is a bit older.

I think that it's important that we pass this legislation. The second aspect that I spoke about earlier is an important one: the duty of fair representation—that they have the chance to appear before the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Finally, in the time that's allocated to me, I just wanted to mention another thing. There is a letter that we received from AMO. They've issued some concerns. They may appear at committee and say, "There's a cost here to the municipalities. They're going to be having to pay more to their firefighters, and it's going to be more expensive to change the existing legislation." But I think the ministry has looked at this, and we're trying to provide consistency and uniformity throughout the province. The bill would give municipalities flexibility to address any particular local cost impacts. The proposed legislation would not directly impact pensions. For municipalities without collective agreements that set out a mandatory retirement age, the age is often set by municipalities through bylaws or employee contracts. Again, approximately 50 of the 75 collective agreements already have a retirement age of 60 or 65.

So I don't think that AMO's arguments, with the greatest respect, are going to negatively affect the proposals in this bill, and the firefighters have responded to those concerns; they're better articulated by the firefighters than they are by myself here today. We have agreed with them—or at least I am agreeing with them today—that you do basically have a cost-neutral situation here, and it doesn't harm the municipalities from entering into this type of a collective agreement with the firefighters.

1710

Again, I speak to support this bill and hope that we have a quick debate here. As the member from Welland mentioned, second reading debate is to talk about some of the broader principles. If it gets to committee, hopefully we'll talk about some of the more detailed provisions and make any amendments that need to be made, bring it back here and have a quick third reading, and be able to put this bill into law before this Legislature rises on June 2.

I thank you for the time to speak today and look forward to questions and comments.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Scarborough Southwest gave a very insightful description of going through the experience of the equipment and the uniforms and the fire suppression challenges, and I completely sympathize. It's a very worthy description to put on the record.

Our critic, the person most passionate on our side of this, Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North, will be up shortly. He carries the torch rather passionately on what I call the Solicitor General file, now called the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. There's no one—and I see that the minister, because he's going to do that, is in now. That's why he's here, out of respect for what comments may be added to this discussion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He may share the time with the minister because they're on same page. They care about public safety.

There really are some things that need to be sorted out, and I hope they're covered. The member from Welland, with his legal training and acumen, referenced three conditions to be non-compliant with human rights provisions. It's important for people today—I'm over 65, and I intend to be here for another 10 years, the people willing.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Ten years?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Twenty, perhaps. My goal is to be here as long as Mr. Bradley, for instance, or Mr. Kormos, for that matter.

I'm not in the kind of duties that the member from Scarborough Southwest described, carrying around a Scott Air-Pak with 50 pounds and smoke and all these various things that you're challenged with. But there needs to be clarification.

Certainly, I would encourage the association that is here listening to contact your MPP and bring them up to speed. This is your life, this is our safety, and I think we want to get this bill right.

So I'm waiting for Garfield Dunlop to definitively—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the comments by the parliamentary assistant, and he made a valuable contribution to this debate, including some very visceral descriptions of his own experiences with carbon and smoke inhalation.

I'm glad the Minister of Community Safety is here because maybe he'll regale us again with observations about how the elimination of a retirement age gives Ontarians the choice as to when to retire. Maybe he'll talk about Freedom 55—or is it 65 or 75 or, indeed, 85?

Down where I come from, I say to you, people don't have those choices if they don't have a pension. People don't have those choices if their modest savings have been swallowed up by a recession and by fund managers who have more interest in generating income for themselves than in protecting the scarce assets of a senior who is retired from Atlas Steel, who, of course, can only collect \$1,000 of his pension because this government won't increase the pension benefits guarantee fund cover-

age to the \$2,500 that has been recommended in the pension report and that New Democrats have been advocating for years now—private member's bills from me, private members' bills from my colleagues.

So I don't know whether the minister is going to talk about how Ontarians now have been liberated; they're free, free to work. That is a—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Didn't the NDP give holidays on contributions?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Oh, wait a minute. The minister missed my comments that it was Bob Rae who gave contribution holidays to the "too big to fail," and subsequent Premiers like Harris, Eves and McGuinty have maintained that—Tories and Liberals, every single one of them. Shame on them all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments. The member for Ajax-Pickering.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to just take the couple of minutes I have available to commend the member from Scarborough Southwest for his presentation on the bill and the comments he made.

Let me digress, though, if I can, for a minute. I'm only hopeful that the member from Durham's constituents have the insight not to keep him around for another 20 years. I mean, please. Respectfully, I like him, but 20 more years? My goodness.

My most current reference—actually, I'm going to a retirement function tomorrow night for Bruce Compton and Dee Amos out in Pickering, both with the fire department, one a platoon captain and one a dispatcher whom I have had the chance to work with in part of my earlier life. Having spent 29 years in elected office, 21 of those in Pickering, I've gotten to know the firefighters and the great work that they do and the support team that works with them.

Having said that, I think politicians should come here a little bit like yoghurt: We really need to come with a best-before date. I, for one, want to leave before my best-before date. I'm not sure when that is exactly; I just know that if I leave by October, it will be before my best-before date. So my plan is to leave accordingly at that point in time and join those in relatively early retirement—like our firefighters, those in suppression, many of whom are here with us this afternoon, who deserve the opportunity, if it's not currently built into their collective agreement, to be able to take a retirement at an age when they are vital, when they do have the capacity, as the member from Welland said, to enjoy those years when they are still physically healthy and able to do that, particularly after, in many cases, having spent 25 or 30 years working in the industry under the types of stresses that the member from Scarborough Southwest speaks of, the physical drain that puts on your body, both the training to be able to do the job and actually doing the job required. We want to thank them for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Just to correct the record, that was the member from Pickering—Scarborough East.

Questions and comments?



**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I want to congratulate the member for his comments on Bill 181, and he brought a lot of the good points about why we're debating this bill. I want to make comments on my colleague from Durham. I didn't realize he was going to spend so many more years here in the Legislature. He should have been a firefighter; maybe he'd be enjoying life more.

I'll have an opportunity, as you heard. I'll be doing the leadoff here. I'm not sure how exciting the leadoff is going to be, because it's a fairly simple bill. I think the House wants to pass this bill, and I look forward to that opportunity to spend my leadoff time.

I think, above all, I want to reemphasize what the member from Welland said earlier. You know what? This is a bill that the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has lobbied for, I know, for at least the last five years, and I think they've got the bulk of the people in this Legislature supporting this legislation.

We don't want this debate to carry on a long time. We think that we should get it to committee as quickly as possible. Possibly, we might even be able to do what happened with the sex offender registry bill, where we actually had committee hearings in the morning, we'd done clause-by-clause in the afternoon and got it back for third reading. That may be a possibility here. I'm not sure—I can't speak on behalf of everyone—but that worked out well, and it worked out well for the sex offender registry folks as well. They were very happy with that commitment from this Parliament.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Scarborough Southwest, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to thank the members from Durham, Welland, Pickering-Scarborough East and Simcoe North for their remarks. I think we're all basically on the same page, with a few aspects to be tweaked or worked out at committee, so I appreciate their remarks. I think we're all in agreement: We want to get this passed before this sitting ends.

I welcome the firefighters who were here from the east in the members' gallery here and the west gallery. I don't know if there are any in the east gallery; I think there are a few other firefighters here as well. I want to thank them all for coming here, because they're listening to the debate, and I know that they're all interested in seeing how this debate plays out.

Again, I thank them for their remarks, and I look forward to the leadoff from the member from Simcoe North. Let's hopefully get this bill through the legislative process as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to be able to rise today and speak on the leadoff on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I'm critic for community safety and correctional services, and this is a Minister of Labour bill. However, because it ties in so tightly with community safety and our firefighters, I made an agreement with the member from Lanark-

Frontenac-Lennox and Addington that I would do the leadoff on this and carry the bill in the debate.

I'm very pleased to do that, particularly because, as I mentioned earlier, we've had around five years to digest what the professional firefighters have asked us to do with this legislation. I think, overall, it's a pretty balanced bill. Some people have asked me, "Why are the volunteers not included at this point?", and this concern and that concern. They took what the membership of the professional firefighters' association had requested, and that is to have this legislation apply to them at this point. They did that, based on many years of study, history, statistics and data that concluded that for people who fight fires, there's an age group of around the age of 60 where you don't have as much stamina and you're more prone to have some types of injuries and cases of heart attacks, which puts your fellow colleagues in jeopardy as well. So it's definitely a labour bill and a public safety bill as well at the same time.

I'm happy to say that I felt the bill was balanced. We'd had so many meetings with the professional firefighters, and we had the support of the leader of our party, Tim Hudak. I think it was good to move forward at this time.

I like to always read the explanatory note into the record. I think it's always good to have that on record in this kind of debate.

"The bill makes several amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

"Section 46.1, which imposes a duty of fair representation on bargaining agents for firefighters, and sections 46.2, 46.3, 46.4 and 46.5, which provide mechanisms for enforcing the duty, are added to the act. These provisions come into force on December 1, 2011"—later on this year.

"Section 53.1, which deals with mandatory retirement for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties, is added to the act. A collective agreement may include a provision requiring such firefighters to retire at a specified age of 60 or over. Such firefighters shall retire at the age specified in their collective agreement, unless their employers can accommodate them without undue hardship.

"After a two-year period, an additional element will take effect: Collective agreements that do not contain mandatory retirement provisions, or that provide for a mandatory retirement age under 60, will be deemed to contain a provision requiring retirement at the age of 60.

"Section 53.1 applies despite the Human Rights Code."

That's all part of the explanatory note that we've had an opportunity to look at, and it's clear there for everyone to see.

A little bit of our briefing notes on it: The bill was introduced by Minister Sousa on April 18, with second reading starting May 3. We have the two critics.

Our key message for our sake is that we believe that the mandatory requirement is appropriate in occupations that are highly physical, such as fire services. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has also expressed his support for this. Both



the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs have been advocating for this. We'd like to listen to deputations from all stakeholders during committee hearings and make amendments accordingly.

The bill makes amendments to part IX of the Fire Protection and Fire Prevention Act, 1997. I already mentioned it in the explanatory note, but I will repeat it again. The proposed changes are as follows: It provides for a mandatory retirement age for firefighters, and the bill would allow a mandatory retirement age for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties, provided it's not lower than the age of 60 and is set out in a collective agreement. If a collective agreement does not contain a mandatory retirement age provision, it would be deemed to contain a mandatory retirement provision setting an age of 60 years.

Secondly, the bill establishes a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining units, and would establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents and allow firefighters access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for duty of fair representation.

The average retirement age for firefighters now is approximately 57, and a few firefighters do retire over the age of 60. So it's not really going to apply to a tremendous number of people, because the younger people start at 24 or 25 years of age and are old enough to draw pensions at the age of 57 or 58. The mandatory human rights provisions would not apply to volunteer firefighters or managers.

The Ontario Human Rights Code allows for mandatory retirement if it is found to be a bona fide occupational requirement. There are approximately 75 collective agreements for full-time firefighters—this has been said a few times in the House today—and the majority, about 50, include mandatory retirement provisions. Approximately 36 municipalities do not have a mandatory retirement age in their collective agreements.

I'm glad to see that so many folks are here today from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association—I talked to president LeBlanc a number of times over the past few days—and I do want to compliment them on their diligence and their passion for this issue over the last four or five years. So it's good to see that the bill was brought forward.

Secondly, we also have to remind members that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin actually had his resolution passed in this House. We all supported that—all three parties—and I think it's safe to say that that was a motion we dealt with based on this, and maybe that actually spurred the government to move forward with this legislation.

I'm not sure how many colleagues in my caucus would like to speak to this bill. We've had a couple now—myself and Mr. O'Toole—and I think it's safe to say that not a lot more members will want to speak to this. So we might be able to get this bill to committee fairly soon, depending on how many government members, and I know there's still the leadoff to do from

the third party. We want to make sure that's done; however, we would like to get this moving along fairly quickly, because I think we are all concerned that when we're this close to the end of the legislative session, if we prorogue a week earlier, we don't want this bill to get caught up in that prorogation. We want to make sure it's passed and proclaimed and doesn't become some kind of election issue because of some people's concerns.

I want to talk about a lot of the firefighters in our communities—although we have an hour to talk, we've already kind of summed up the bill, so I want to talk about a number of the firefighting organizations I represent and some of the people I work with. Certainly, one of the people who come here regularly on firefighters' lobby day is my colleague and friend Michael Gagnon from the Midland fire service. He always arrives and we usually have lunch or breakfast or something like that and chat about all the issues and go over the file and the issue notes for that particular day. Michael has always been a very strong and passionate firefighter in the Midland area.

I can tell you that based on last year, when we had the tornado in the town of Midland—it hit the community very suddenly almost a year ago; about 11 months. I can tell you it was a real tragedy for the community, but the fire service and Chief Kevin Foster did a remarkable job. No lives were lost, and the reaction and professional conduct of all the emergency services—they did a remarkable job. So we're very pleased that the Midland fire service is supporting this and are supportive of this legislation as well and want it to apply as quickly as possible.

Another friend of mine is Glenn Higgins, who is the president of the professional firefighters in the city of Orillia fire service. I want to point out that they've done a fairly good job in the city of Orillia over the last few years. They've just built a new fire station; it's the second fire station in the community. I know they've got some issues, but they can tell you that they've got a number of—I guess what I'm trying to say is that this community, the city of Orillia, because of Highway 11, has a tremendous number of calls it makes. My office in Orillia is on a corner not too far from the fire hall, and when you actually spend time in that office and spend the whole day, you realize how many times that fire truck leaves that office—over and over and over throughout the day, as they get calls on the highway and for the heart attacks and all the different things that apply.

1730

Again, Glenn is supportive of this legislation. He was also here on lobby day. He supports the bill from Michael Brown, from Algoma. I think it's safe to say that they're onside with everything the professional firefighters are doing province-wide.

Kevin White is our government relations gentleman from the city of Barrie. I know that my colleague from Barrie is here today as well. I'm quite sure Kevin meets with her as well on lobby day. They've got a very, very busy fire station in the city of Barrie. It's one of the



fastest-growing communities in the province. I think there are four stations there now, and because of the Barrie-Innisfil annexation, they'll have to add another station sometime in the old Innisfil section.

I have to apologize; this is where I kind of have a conflict of interest here. My daughter's partner is a firefighter with the city of Barrie firefighters, so if there's a conflict in this House, it's me, because I'm speaking in support of something that will help him, okay? But I don't really consider it a conflict. He's somebody who's always on my case about the issues around firefighters, the issues around mandatory retirement, presumptive legislation and all that sort of thing. It's great to work with these guys.

On top of that, it's interesting, because today the leader and I went out and the leader spoke to the Ontario fire chiefs' association. Their conference is today at DoubleTree out on Dixon Road. They have quite an interesting program. We talked about all the different—you know, presumptive legislation.

One of the things that was near and dear to all of our hearts, and that I would like to put on the record today, is the way the fire services communities responded to the two gentlemen who lost their lives in Listowel, the two firefighters, the volunteers in the North Perth organization, back a few weeks ago. It was simply a tragedy. It was interesting to attend the service and see the fire service community from all across Ontario and other parts of the country, as well as the States, showing up to support these gentlemen who had lost their lives.

In my own community, I've got a number of fire services. Many of them are volunteer firefighter organizations as well. One of the neat things—this morning I met a gentleman from the Ontario Fire College. One of the things that the communities in Simcoe county are quite proud of is the amount of training that the municipalities allow the volunteers to get. A lot of them go to the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst for that training. One of the interesting things about the training is that it's often—many of these young guys who are volunteer firefighters want a career as a professional firefighter. This training helps them a lot in applying for jobs, and many of them have received jobs not only in Barrie, Orillia and Midland but they've received them in Toronto and the GTA, and they're very proud of that.

That's one thing: If there's ever a conflict with volunteers and municipalities that don't have a full-time firefighter, in many cases the municipalities actually complain that they pay all this money to train volunteers so they can move on to a full-time job. But we do that in many organizations and many different jobs in this country. I can tell you that it's always quite nice when you hear those stories: Some guy who joined the fire department at the age of 18 or 19 gets a lot of training, and the next thing you know, he has an opportunity to get a full-time job, and well-paying, with pensions and all that sort of thing, and we're very happy that that happens and it applies.

I wanted to say this about the volunteers, because with the mutual aid system, the volunteers, of course, work

with the full-time guys. We've had some simply amazing stories up in the Simcoe county area over the years, and one of the things is to do with train derailments. Train derailments are an amazing thing to happen, but in the township of Severn, which is where I live in the county of Simcoe—it's in the centre of my municipality—you may recall, Mr. Speaker, that earlier this year, there was a large train derailment. It was sort of on the Muskoka-Simcoe North border at Severn Falls. A large freight train went off the rails. It was just amazing how all of the fire departments came together with the police services and responded and got the people out of their homes. There was actually an evacuation in the area. It was interesting to see how they worked and got everything under control. The Canadian National came in with their equipment. There were not a lot of delays in railway shipping at that time, but it was because of the good work of the emergency services that were there almost immediately.

The Severn township fire department has, I think, a total of three full-time people: the chief, the deputy and, I believe, the fire prevention officer. I met the chief today down at the Ontario fire chiefs' association and we were chatting about that.

Just recently, last Thursday, the township of Severn purchased a new pumper truck. I know that the company they purchased it from asked Severn if they could get it back for a couple of days because they had to take it down to the exhibit at the Toronto Congress Centre, where they had a couple of days of showing off all the nice new equipment that is available to the fire departments. So Severn took their equipment down there too. They have a total of four stations in the township of Severn, covering a fairly large geographical area, including a tremendous amount of crown land.

The township of Oro-Medonte is another one of my large communities. It's got a total population of about 22,000 people. I believe there's a total of four full-time people in that department, along with five stations. They've got a lot of equipment, but one of the things in Oro-Medonte that they are responding continually to—as well as the township of Severn—is the fact that they've got the Highway 400 extension and Highway 11 going through the centre of the township. They get a tremendous amount of calls from those four-lane highways, which require a lot of attention and a lot of care.

Again, they're tied in a lot. It's amazing to watch the mutual aid system work, where Barrie and Orillia come out to help them at times. There were times when they've had to go back into the cities as well with some of the big fires.

As well as those two, we have the township of Ramara, which is down by the Beaverton area. It takes in an area up to Orillia. I believe there are three stations in the township of Ramara, one new building included. Ted Conway is the chief there; I'm not sure if Ted made the convention here today or not. However, they had a major train derailment about eight years ago when some chemical leaked out of one of the cars. I can tell you that at that point, because there are a lot of quarries in the area, the quarries' front-end loaders came to their rescue



and helped them with pushing clay into certain areas so that the chemical couldn't get into the farmland and into the water supply.

On top of that, I have two other townships, Tay township and the township of Tiny. I think Tiny has five stations and Tay has four stations. These are all well-manned stations, with well-trained people, and as I said earlier, a lot of the guys who are trained by the municipalities often go out and end up with jobs as full-time firefighters in some of the other communities, like Barrie and Orillia. Many of them commute back and forth to Toronto.

1740

On top of that, we also have the Penetanguishene Fire Department. It is a volunteer fire department, with a couple of full-time people: the chief and one other. Penetanguishene is tied in with the group of Tay, Tiny, Penetang, Midland, Beausoleil First Nation and also the township of Georgian Bay. They all work together on a lot of projects together to help with fire prevention.

As well, we have two other First Nation fire departments: the Beausoleil First Nation, which is out on Christian Island in Georgian Bay, as well as the Chippewas of Rama. The Chippewas of Rama probably have, in my opinion, the most equipment per capita, but they also look after the casino at Casino Rama. It's a full-time fire department. I believe there are 12 full-time members there, and they have some remarkable equipment that they use. They've also got a tower truck etc., just in case there are emergencies around Casino Rama.

The riding I represent is a fairly large geographical riding. There are a lot of halls, a lot of stations, a lot of people putting a lot of time and effort into these jobs, and every time we do something in this Legislature that applies to helping them, I think it's very, very important.

As I said earlier, we will be supporting Bill 181. This follows along the line of a lot of the other things we've done in this House around fire protection. One of them, of course, was presumptive legislation. I recall the day we passed presumptive legislation—I believe the former speaker was the minister at the time. I think it was a fairly proud day in this Legislature. The minister introduced the bill, and I believe that within five minutes, it was all passed. Jim Wilson, the member from Simcoe-Grey, asked if we could have unanimous support to have second and third reading, and we passed that bill that day and got it done so it was done once and for all. We almost did the same thing with the sex offender registry. I think it was good that we showed that leadership as politicians in these types of things.

Last year, the minister, after some questions in the House on volunteer firefighters who showed up—I think it was Mr. Levac and Minister Fonseca at the time who made an announcement out in Paris, Ontario, saying, "You know what? We'll apply this same law, the presumptive legislation, to our volunteers." I believe there's something like 20,000 volunteers across our province.

I just want to get back over to this one problem that I've got, and I am hoping that the government will listen

to this and will take this very seriously. I had asked a question in the House here about a week ago on firefighter Tom LeBlanc, who lost his life with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He passed away after 32 years' experience as a forestry firefighter working for our province. He's not covered under presumptive legislation. There's nothing that covers him. Apparently, they're saying that there's not enough proof that he had contracted cancer because of the forest fires. But the fact of the matter is, this guy probably has inhaled more smoke than a lot of firefighters would ever dream of inhaling, because the forestry firefighters don't have the same apparatus and they sometimes spend weeks in the bush. This guy spent 32 years and fought fires all over North America for the Ministry of Natural Resources.

I asked the question to the minister. The minister met myself and Tom's widow, Kim, down the hall at a meeting, and we talked about it again. I'm hoping that that's not going to die. I'm hoping that the WSIB and the Ministry of Labour can make this happen so that our full-time firefighters who work for this government—they work for the Ministry of Natural Resources—can be covered with that same legislation.

I believe they're hiring part-timers right now for the forestry season. I think I even saw on the news a little earlier here today that there's already a forest fire burning somewhere in California. Those kinds of guys will be asked to go and help those other jurisdictions fight these fires. So it's important that we apply that.

I know it's all part of the presumptive legislation, but if we're going along with the mandatory retirement—when we get to committee with Bill 181, we're going to be hearing from different organizations. We know that AMO will likely come, because they've got a few concerns. The OPFFA responded back, and I like the answers that I see in there. I'm hoping that there will be a very positive response from AMO. We'll see about the hidden costs or any costs that there are, and we'll try to work with those.

We also know that the Ontario fire chiefs' association—as I said earlier, we were out there this morning at the conference and our leader, Tim, spoke to them, and they now have some concerns that maybe the volunteers should be covered at this time. We're not 100% sure. They may come back and ask us to do some kind of an amendment. Of course, we know that the OPFFA will be there and there may be some other organizations that will show up to either support or have some kind of negative comments about the bill.

I think we know in this House that basically we all support what we've seen, what we've been told or been lobbied about for the last five years, and I think it's safe to say that we'd like to have this bill get before the committee as soon as possible. I'm not sure when the bill is being called again, but it may be as early as next week. I'm not sure how long we're here. I believe the calendar date is June 2 when we actually leave here, but if the House happens to adjourn the week before, which wouldn't surprise me at all, we don't want this bill to get caught up in it.



I've talked with the other critic, the member for Welland, today, and so we can say together that we support getting this bill passed as quickly as we possibly can and getting it to committee. If it's possible to do the clause-by-clause on the same day—if anybody is hearing any negative comments or some kind of an amendment they'd like to see in the bill, it would be nice to bring it forward as soon as possible so we at least know, even before the committee hearings apply, that it's something we can work with.

With that, I've covered a bit of territory. I just want to thank everybody for their support of this kind of legislation in this House. Like I said earlier, although it's a Ministry of Labour bill, in the end it affects people in community safety, and we want to make sure that we protect those who protect us.

I think it's safe to say, as we mentioned at different times and as was mentioned in all the briefing notes that we've received from the different stakeholders, that the age of 60 is an age when trends definitely happen. People are more likely to have heart attacks or problems that would affect your fellow partner. We saw that earlier this year in the fire right over here on Yonge Street. I believe it was an arson case—I'm not sure if that was the final outcome or not. They've actually torn the building down. It was over by the Delta Chelsea area. A couple of firefighters went through the roof of that particular building. They had all the precautions in place, but what a lot of the firefighters are telling me is, if someone has a heart attack or has an incident that would have some kind of an impact on their partner, the partner couldn't help to get them out, or both could be caught in the blaze.

This is really all about saving lives. Community safety is the safety of the firefighters and the protection of the firefighters as well, and I think it's safe to say that we should be supporting them.

As I said, our caucus will be supporting this legislation. Our leader supports it. The PC caucus supports it. As we move forward, we hope that this bill can not only be passed in the next couple of weeks—we don't want any delays on it—but proclaimed as quickly as possible so that we can get everything coming into action before the provincial election hits, before this House prorogues later on in the season.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I appreciate this opportunity to speak.

1750

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened to the member with his valuable contribution to the debate.

I'm not very pleased with all of the references to the afflictions that accompany men and, I suppose, women as they approach the age of 60. I'm 58, going to be 59, and I was fine until I was reminded by Mr. Dunlop. Now I need my 300 milligrams of ibuprofen, which I usually take about an hour earlier, around 5 p.m., rather than waiting until 6.

The position has been well put. I do want to say that I truly wish that we were proceeding with a bill that would give a reasonable retirement age, along with a good pension, to every worker in this province—every worker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** How about MPPs?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mr. O'Toole interjects. He says MPPs. MPPs have a pension. All three political parties, under the leadership of Mr. O'Toole's Mike Harris, created a defined contribution pension plan back in 1996. I was here; I witnessed the member's colleagues voting for it. So he has a pension plan and also a salary that's far more than most working people in this province.

As I say, I truly wish we were debating and proceeding with a bill that would give every working woman or man in this province a reasonable retirement age with a decent pension upon their retirement. We all know that the motivation for this government removing retirement age—the issue of discrimination was hokey. It was all about the collapse of pension plans and the pressure that mostly my generation, baby boomers, are putting on those pension plans and the reluctance of the corporate world to want to share in funding those pension plans.

As to the cost to municipalities, let's just raise this point: Pensions are workers' salaries. We're not talking about additional cost. All a pension plan is is a deferred salary, so I don't want to hear anything more about that from AMO or from the member over here to my right—my far right, I suppose.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I would share with all the members that March 17, St. Patrick's Day this year, was a very sad and tragic day in my riding. Deputy fire chief Ken Rea from Atwood and firefighter Ray Walter from Listowel tragically lost their lives responding to a fire. Many people today were at a very moving and beautiful service that was held in Listowel Memorial Arena. I always remember that you could hear a pin drop for an hour and a half in an arena that was filled with well over 1,000 people. They did that out of respect, and it brought into great relief for all of us how much we need our firefighters.

I'd say to all members: We need them, and they have come here and said, "We need something from you, our elected leaders." We need them, and they have come with all respect and said to us, "We need something from you. Could you please do this?"

I can't think of a member who would not want to vote for this bill out of respect for the bravery that is shown each and every day by our professional firefighters and by our volunteer firefighters. I know that my good friend the Minister of Agriculture—and I say to my friend from Simcoe North, our professional firefighters and our volunteer firefighters work hand in hand when mutual aid is required. They're all brothers as firefighters—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And sisters.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** And sisters as well, I say to my friend. So as a result, I think it is important for us, as my friend from Simcoe North said, to dispose of this bill

as quickly as we can. Make sure that we get the bill right, but it is important for us to show the political leadership, all three parties here, to ensure that this request from the people in our society who we need can be met, and it's our way of showing respect to them. We need them, and in this case, they need us. Let's not miss that call.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I just want to acknowledge on our side—I'm sure the member from Simcoe North will also reflect, as he does—the tragic event at Listowel, as you referenced. Again, it was even here on the remarks that were put down out of respect. I think that for me to besmirch in any way what's been said and the support that's been expressed for Bill 181 would be a fine place to stop.

The member from Welland brought up that he hopes that all workers receive fair treatment. I think we all do. That's something that's complicated in terms of today's age of moving out of an era of globalization. I worked at General Motors for 31 years, and I think those days are somewhat in question at the moment. But my point is that we do have a pension provincially. It is a defined contribution plan. It's quite a different pension than a defined benefit plan. So we have one. I've been here almost 15 or 16 years, and the total value of that, with my own taxable contributions, would be less than an RRSP. If you formed a RIF or an income fund from that—I'm over 65—you'd get about \$600 a month.

In fairness, that's a brief explanation of a very complex topic. I'm not asking for sympathy. I am looking at young people like Mr. Wilkinson or the member from Scarborough who's here. That is an issue that needs to be addressed. If you have difficulties, the Board of Internal Economy will deal with that.

I offer this back to you because I'm over 65 and I had a good long working career. There are people here who spend a long time here fighting the fires of supporting public policy, and it should be respected. I'll leave that on the record.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

The member for Simcoe North, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the members from Welland and Durham and the Minister of the Environment for their comments. We have these leadoffs, and they do take—it's hard to speak for an hour on an issue, so you have to get into the volunteers and the whole business of fire protection. I think we do a pretty darned good job here in the province of Ontario. Our municipal partners, whether they're professional or volunteers, do a great job.

One of the things I haven't heard in the debate yet and one of the things that people don't realize outside of probably their own communities is how much volunteer work our firefighters do in our communities for the different diseases and fundraisers etc., for different community organizations. We see it with the sale of their calendars. I don't know if any of you guys up there—

maybe Fred has been on a few calendars in the past; I'm not sure. I know that every year my wife gets a calendar from Sudbury. I don't know why, but the Sudbury firefighters always send her a calendar every year.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yes, you know why, Garfield; come on.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I don't know why. I think it's that when I did the blood sampling bill, I went to Sudbury, and ever since then they send her a calendar. It's not addressed to me; it's addressed to my wife.

I just want to thank all the members of the House for supporting this legislation. I hope, as we said earlier, it can get to committee quickly and we can pass it and have it proclaimed before this House adjourns a little later on in the spring.

On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, we're proud to support this legislation, Bill 181.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We certainly did have a broad discussion on the general principle of this bill today, and I thank all the members for it.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## ROYAL ASSENT

### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

An Act to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Loi modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

An Act to revive 1314596 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive S.L. McNally Consulting Services Inc.

An Act to revive Bahram & Hamid Inc.

An Act respecting the Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London in Ontario.

An Act to revive 1312510 Ontario Ltd.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** According to my trusty pocket watch, it is 6 of the clock. This House is adjourned until Thursday, May 5, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakubuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Phil McNeely  
Yasir Naqvi, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek  
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark  
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones  
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craitor  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day











*Continued from back cover*

**Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	5688
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	5688

**Children's mental health services**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5688
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	5688

**Skills development**

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5689
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5689

**Correction of record**

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5689
-------------------------	------

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /  
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....	5689
M. Phil McNeely.....	5689
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5689

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /  
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Student achievement**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5690
-----------------------	------

**Hearn generating station**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5690
-----------------------	------

**Parkdale United Church**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5690
-----------------------	------

**Wine industry**

Mrs. Julia Munro.....	5690
-----------------------	------

**Pension reform**

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	5691
-------------------------------	------

**Teachers**

Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	5691
------------------------	------

**Silfab Ontario**

Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	5691
-------------------------	------

**Assistance to farmers**

Mr. Pat Hoy.....	5691
------------------	------

**Support Staff Appreciation Day**

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5692
-----------------------------	------

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /  
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

**Standing Committee on Social Policy**

Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5692
Report adopted .....	5692

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Big A Amusements Ltd. Act, 2011, Bill Pr47,  
Mr. Delaney**

First reading agreed to.....	5692
------------------------------	------

**Twenty-First Century Skills Award Act, 2011, Bill  
190, Mr. O'Toole / Loi de 2011 sur le Prix  
Compétences pour le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle, projet de loi 190,  
M. O'Toole**

First reading agreed to.....	5692
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5692

**MOTIONS**

**Private members' public business**

Hon. Gerry Phillips .....	5693
Motion agreed to .....	5693

**René Piché**

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5693
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5694
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5695

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS  
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

**Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage  
Month**

Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	5696
-------------------------	------

**Children's Mental Health Week / Semaine de la  
santé mentale des enfants**

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	5697
----------------------------	------

**Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage  
Month**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5698
----------------------	------

**Children's Mental Health Week**

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5698
-----------------------	------

**Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage  
Month**

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5698
-------------------------	------

**Children's Mental Health Week**

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5699
-------------------------	------

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

**Fire protection services**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5699
------------------------	------

**Environmental protection**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5700
-----------------------	------



<b>Photo identification</b>	
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5700
<b>Cambridge Memorial Hospital</b>	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5700
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Kim Craiton .....	5700
<b>Tobacco control</b>	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5701
<b>Paramedics</b>	
Mr. Pat Hoy .....	5701
<b>Dog ownership</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5701
<b>Paramedics</b>	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5701
<b>Highway safety</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5701
<b>Paramedics</b>	
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5702
<b>Dog ownership</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5702
<b>Special education</b>	
Mr. Kim Craiton .....	5702

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5702
Mr. Rick Johnson.....	5705
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5705
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	5706
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5706
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5706
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5707
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5710
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5710
Mr. Wayne Arthurs.....	5710
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5711
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5711
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5711
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5715
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5715
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5716
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5716
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5716
<b>Royal assent / Sanction royale</b>	
The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) .....	5716

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 4 May 2011 / Mercredi 4 mai 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011, Bill 179, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 favorisant la fondation de familles et la réussite chez les jeunes, projet de loi 179, Mme Broten</b>	
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5669
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5669
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5670
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5670
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5670
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5670
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5671
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5672
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	5672
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5673
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5673
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5673
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5674
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5676
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5676
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5676
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5677
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5677
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5677
<b>Wearing of ribbons</b>	
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5677

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	5678
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	5678
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5678
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5678
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5678
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	5678
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5678
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	5678
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5678
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5678
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5678
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5678
<b>Legislative pages</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5678

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Smart meters</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5678
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5678
<b>Smart meters</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5679
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5679
<b>Health care</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5680
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5680
<b>Health care</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5681
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5681
<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	5682
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5682
<b>Children's mental health services</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5683
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5683
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5683
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5683
<b>Smart meters</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5684
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5684
<b>Forest industry</b>	
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5684
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5685
<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5685
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5685
<b>School transportation</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5686
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5686
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5686
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	5686
<b>Literacy and basic skills</b>	
Mr. David Oraziotti .....	5687
Hon. John Milloy .....	5687

*Continued on inside back cover*





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Assemblée législative  
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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Thursday 5 May 2011

Jeudi 5 mai 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 May 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUILDING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING YOUTH TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT LA FONDATION DE FAMILLES ET LA RÉUSSITE CHEZ LES JEUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 4, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance / Projet de loi 179, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne l'adoption et les soins et l'entretien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's a real pleasure for me to have this opportunity to contribute to the debate this morning on Bill 179, the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act.

I'd like to begin by commending the member for Dufferin-Caledon on her outstanding work on this issue. She is a strong advocate and a passionate advocate for the children in this province. I share her passion.

I am extremely happy and pleased that this bill will, at long last, provide those young children and older children, the teens, who are crown wards, with the opportunity to see the legal barriers removed in order that they can be adopted. There are thousands of children waiting for adoption. On the other side, we have thousands of families who are wanting to adopt these children, but they cannot.

The approximate number of children adopted each year in Ontario through the three provincial adoption services is 1,600. The approximate number of crown wards is about 9,000. Clearly, we have a problem.

Children's aid societies in this province have been looking for change now for almost eight years. They have been pleading with the government to take action on the issue of crown wards and adopted children between the ages of 16 and 18. Also, if we go back a couple of

years, the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption, headed by Dr. David Johnston, the former president of the University of Waterloo and now the Governor General, also recommended that changes be made.

We have in the province, then, about 9,000 crown wards who are waiting for adoption, but last year only 993 were adopted. So we have seen very little change in recent years. Part of the reason is because the children's aid societies in Ontario do not have the means to review access orders in a timely manner, and part of the problem, of course, is that these children cannot be adopted at the present time.

Let's take a look at the current situation. Currently in Ontario, when a child becomes a ward of the crown, an access order is usually put in place by a judge with the best interests of the child in mind. This access order allows the child's parents, siblings and other relatives or close friends to have access to the child while they are under the care of a CAS organization. However, many of these access orders go unused and serve to create additional difficulties for the courts, the CAS and any person or family wanting to adopt the child. As soon as an access order is put in place at the present time, a crown ward can no longer be adopted. This legislation, which proposes to abolish the access orders, will finally make it easier for a crown ward to find an adoptive home.

Under this legislation, when a child is placed for adoption, all access orders attached to that child will be terminated, thereby streamlining the system and making it much easier for the CAS to find homes for crown wards. The CAS will then be responsible for notifying the holder of the access order that it is being terminated and that the child has been identified as a candidate for adoption. In the event that the access order was deemed to be beneficial for the child, a judge may issue an openness order allowing a continued relationship with the person who is beneficial or meaningful for the child. Prospective families will be notified of such a decision.

The second part of this bill concerns children aged 16 to 18 who want to return to the care of a CAS if they have left for any reason, as does happen. Presently, any child who enters care before the age of 16 is eligible to be in care until their 18th birthday. If a child aged 16 to 18 leaves care now, they are not able to return, as the age of care in Ontario is 16. The legislative changes that this bill is proposing will allow any child aged 16 to 18 who has previously been in care to return to the care of the CAS—a good change.

The changes that we have before us are positive changes. They are reforms that are necessary; however,

they are reforms that are long overdue. And there are other changes that we had hoped to see within this legislation that have not yet been brought forward by the government. For example, this bill fails to resolve the home study issue. We know that there is currently a list of about 1,500 families waiting to have a home study completed. As you can well imagine, Mr. Speaker, this is a massive backlog, and obviously, action must be taken.

In fact, as the member for Dufferin—Caledon pointed out, this number is actually much lower than the real figure due to the fact, which she indicated, that many CASs are telling willing families who want to adopt a child not to put their name forward for the waiting list because of the immense and unacceptable backlog. The ministry—the government—has not attempted to address this issue, other than to say that some temporary funding will be provided. There is no concrete long-term plan of action and guarantee that this issue will be addressed.

The second problem that we have with the bill is that this is going to force even more responsibility and work on the already overstressed and underfunded children's aid societies. This expands their mandate, as it does expand their workload. However, the government has not indicated that there will be any additional funding provided for the expansion of their mandate and their expanded role. We have been hearing increasingly in recent months and years from the CASs throughout Ontario that they are being forced to lay off staff and that they face severe budgetary constraints.

**0910**

Obviously, this government needs to address the issue and provide a funding model that corresponds to their mandate and their expanded role. We simply know that it is impossible for the CASs to continue to provide their essential services to our children at a high level without the financial means and the staff to do so.

Briefly, I'd also like to touch on the need to have more resources devoted to special-needs adoptions. Unfortunately, although we do see the adoption of children within the province of Ontario, those children with special needs have an extremely difficult time of finding an adoptive home, if they do at all, because these children with special needs require additional resources above and beyond what the average child requires. Once a family adopts a child with special needs, under the current terms, they are now solely responsible for ensuring that the child has access to the resources and the personnel that are required. Many families, as you can understand, find this financially difficult. They want to provide a loving home for this child, but they simply cannot afford to do so. Somehow, we need to provide incentives and support to these families who can provide those caring homes to those children with special needs.

I am encouraged with the legislation before us. I am pleased that it is going to remove the legal barriers currently preventing children who are crown wards from being adopted. As I said, there are about 9,000 of these children, and the majority of them who are older children today live in foster care group homes. Regrettably, these

children have not been in a position where they have been able to be adopted.

In my own community, in the region of Waterloo, I know that there are about 254 crown wards, of whom about 143 have court-issued access orders. In the past two years, 65 children were adopted locally. This is a little higher because our Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region has been a leader in finding permanent homes for these children, and for this I want to applaud the staff.

We're moving forward with the bill to remove the legal barrier to the adoption, as was recommended by the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption, and this is a good thing. I think we also have to recognize that by doing this, we are intervening earlier in the lives of our children, as we should. We know that those children who are never adopted are also less likely to complete high school. They are more likely to have children at an early age. They usually have more mental health issues or a need for social assistance, experience poverty and are in trouble with the law.

Again, I think we need to remember, just as our government introduced the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program in order to identify those children at birth in this province who were going to be in need of additional support, whether it would be from nurses or from other agencies in the province of Ontario or from those who would visit families in order to make sure that families were able to relate and support those babies—by moving forward and making sure that all the children in this province who are in a position to be adopted can be adopted and put into homes where they will be loved and cared for; where they will find stability and develop the self-worth that is so important to their later life.

So I encourage everyone in this House to support this bill. I hope that we can move this bill forward very quickly, and let's do so for the children who are waiting to be adopted and for the thousands of families that are waiting for these children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the comments made by the member from Kitchener—Waterloo.

I, for one, continue to remind people that legislation is always fluid, so we take from where we have been. Some legislation has been sitting on the books for decades and decades with no changes, and this is part of that continuation and the flow of the kind of legislation that we see now. The member rightfully points out that these impediments that are there stopped an awful lot of people from doing the things they wanted to do. She's acknowledged support for the vote, and I appreciate that.

When you take those impediments away, you provide for an opportunity for the adoptions to take place, which is exactly what the legislation is designed to do. The downside to this is taking a look at it and saying, "What else can you do? What else have you done? What haven't you done?" As I said, in terms of the fluid nature of legis-



lation, this is not being held out as the be-all and end-all of this issue. Quite frankly, we'll continue to see modifications and changes as we go along in society and its concepts and ideas change as well.

I appreciate the fact that the member is in support of the legislation. She also dutifully points out some of the areas which we should continue to take a look at and improve. I agree with her. That's the idea of opposition: to be able to stand up and say, "Here are some of the shortfalls, here are some of the shortcomings of the legislation and here are some different ideas that you may want to consider in the future."

But I want to come back to the point of making sure that people understand that there are many, many champions in this place who want to see the best for our children. To point anyone out in particular I think doesn't do justice to those who have fought long and hard to keep care of our children. To ensure that the parents have an opportunity to do that adoption is important, but more importantly, without disrespect, it is about the kids, and I appreciate the member's comments about that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I also want to echo my impressions and my thankfulness to the member from Kitchener-Waterloo. Her long experience here and her obvious care and compassionate approach to challenges are highly regarded. Her recognition of the work done by the member for Dufferin-Caledon is indeed very appropriate, as it would be for the member from Whitby-Oshawa and the work they've done on children's mental health.

I also say that there is unanimous agreement here, on both sides of the House, that this should move forward. There has been time to address some of the issues: Without making this a little bit edgy, the expert panel was released in 2009; it's 2011 now. We have had a whole-some discussion on this and there is unanimous support for the bill to go to committee to sort out a few of the issues.

The issues have been brought up in the context—the member from Welland has spoken a number of times on this and commented on the situation today, as we have all worked with the CASs in our areas: the lack of resources that are in the community. I don't blame anyone specifically, but the evidence is there for us to examine.

There are some barriers that even the expert panel—I'm sure they're pleased that we're moving forward and that the committee will deal with some of the issues.

Now, the barriers here represent real savings for families and real opportunities for families. A child in custody in a CAS today is about \$32,000 a year, perhaps more in some cases—difficult to serve. They're under a lot of stress to have transition funding to families that want to take these children into their families, and that's really the focus of everything. The member from Kitchener-Waterloo has stressed that children are at the centre of this, and we have to act responsibly and quickly to make sure that they're no longer vulnerable and that they have the joy of being in a family.

0920

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I agree with what my colleague just said, that we want as many children in Ontario to live within loving families.

There are many examples of kids who are under the responsibility of the crown in some of the First Nations in my riding, and those kids often have special needs. The CAS would have worked with them to finally have a support system built around the child. This support system costs money. Although we have many, many families who would love to take those children and adopt them and make them fully part of their family, they are poor families that could never be able to afford the cost of the support that this child needs to be able to become all that he or she could be.

The bill, the way it is now—we see all support, all monetary support for that child, disappear the minute the family takes it in and adopts it. For me and for the families that I deal with, this is a huge barrier. Their heart is open; their heart is big enough to take those children in, and they want to, but it is their income that isn't big enough to meet the needs of those children. The minute they adopt them, all support ceases immediately. So the work that has been done to support and to build a circle of support around the child would automatically disappear. This is the real barrier to adopting all of those crown ward children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm encouraged that we're discussing this legislation, and I want to thank my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo for her insight into this issue.

I want to state for the record that I do believe that there is another dimension that must be addressed in this province when it comes to the issue of adoption. I have had a number of constituents speak with me about their experience as parents who want to adopt and who are, in fact, in the process of going through that exercise with the children's aid society. Their concern is the level of professionalism around the interview process that they are experiencing. I believe that the children's aid societies have a responsibility to ensure that the social workers who have the responsibility of interviewing potential adoptive parents are qualified to do so and that there are the appropriate accountability measures in place to ensure that that process is, in fact, a professional and sensitive process.

I'll have more to say about this as the debate goes on, but I just want to raise the issue that I believe that part of our problem is, in fact, the underfunding of our children's aid societies throughout this province, and that has to be addressed by this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Kitchener-Waterloo has two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I want to thank the members for Brant, Durham, Nickel Belt and Newmarket-Aurora.



Let me just repeat again: I welcome this change to the adoption law. As my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora has said, he has been in contact with families. I would say to you that much of what I’ve said today is based on conversations that I have had with families in my own community, people who have come to my office. There are many families out here who are looking to adopt children. Many of them, because they have been prevented from doing so within our own province, have obviously looked for international adoptions. But I can tell you that the process, whether it’s the home study or going through a lot of red tape and huge amounts of money—I know one family who would have preferred to have adopted a child here but weren’t able to do so—because we do know that we have so many crown wards who haven’t been eligible for adoption—and I know they have spent \$50,000.

This change to the legislation today is a welcome change. It is going to unite children who are looking to be part of a loving family with those families who currently have no children and want to provide to those children a loving, stable environment. It is a very good step forward. However, we need to keep in mind that there is a need for additional resources for the children’s aid societies and there is a need to facilitate the home studies. Obviously, we need to take a look at what else we can do to make sure that all children in this province are given the best start in life possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

Ms. Smith moved second reading of Bill 179. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I hear some noes.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We’ll defer the vote until deferred votes after question period.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

#### SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO BY REDUCING CONTRABAND TOBACCO ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 APPUYANT LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE PAR LA RÉDUCTION DU TABAC DE CONTREBANDE

Ms. Aggelonitis moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act /  
Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Debate? The Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I would like to share my time with the member from Scarborough–Guildwood.

Today I rise in the House to speak to the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act. As I stated on April 21, when introducing this legislation, Bill 186 is part of our government’s commitment to create a smoke-free Ontario. In developing such an important piece of legislation, we considered the ideas and proposals of our many partners and stakeholders, who share our concern and our commitment to addressing this complex problem.

I’d like to share with the House some of what experts are saying. For example, Dr. Lynne Thurling, president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, says that her governing organization “warmly welcomes the government’s enhanced commitment to smoking cessation in Ontario and to reducing the supply of illegal tobacco across the province. We are committed to supporting initiatives that seek to improve the health of Ontarians and our health care system. We congratulate the government on this important initiative.”

Dr. Mark MacLeod, president of the Ontario Medical Association, states that the legislation “is another important step in the ongoing fight against tobacco. Keeping illegal cigarettes out of our children’s hands is a good thing.”

If passed, Bill 186 would help to protect our youth from the dangers of cheap, illegal tobacco. I cannot emphasize enough our important job as parents and leaders: We must do everything possible to prevent our youth from starting to smoke, and provide support to those who want to quit.

**0930**

Smoking kills thousands of people each and every year in the province of Ontario. This is an alarming number and cause for significant concern. As little as a few dollars can buy a young person a pack of illegal cigarettes. The low cost and easy availability of illegal tobacco represents an unfortunate incentive for them to take up smoking or to start again if they have already quit. These startling facts are a call to action for this government to remain focused on reducing the supply of illegal tobacco in Ontario.

Before I provide highlights of Bill 186, I’d like to remind members of the House of our government’s important progress when it comes to illegal tobacco in Ontario. In the last six of eight years, our government has brought forward measures to reduce the availability of illegal tobacco. Starting with the 2004 budget, several enhancements to the regulatory and enforcement provisions of the Tobacco Tax Act were introduced. Some of these included: (1) expanding provisions for seizing and disposing of unmarked cigarettes; and (2) increasing offences and penalties for individuals distributing tobacco without authorization, including increased sanctions for repeat offenders.

Further amendments to the Tobacco Tax Act were announced in 2006. The 2006 amendments strengthened Ontario’s tobacco-related enforcement activities by allowing increased information-sharing on tobacco-related matters among provincial, municipal and federal governments.



In the 2007 Ontario budget, several additional measures were taken to enforce tobacco tax compliance and protect tobacco tax revenue. For example, we assigned additional resources to increase enforcement activities relating to tobacco distribution and the retail sector; we also increased sanctions and enforcement measures associated with distributing and possessing illegal tobacco; and we added a provision to temporarily suspend a retailer's ability to sell tobacco products where the retailer had been found to be repeatedly in violation of the Tobacco Tax Act.

In the 2008 budget, we continued to build on many proposals enacted in the previous years. They included requiring persons who possess or import cigarette-making machines to be registered as manufacturers under the Tobacco Tax Act; also, we added more legislative provisions that would allow the seizure of tobacco products from persons found to be violating the legislation; and added fixed penalties to existing tax-based penalties that could be assessed against persons contravening the act.

In the 2009 Ontario budget, we further strengthened the enforcement elements of the Tobacco Tax Act. These measures included enforcement provisions aimed at individuals when there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe they have contravened the legislation; provisions that prohibit the possession of any quantity of unmarked cigarettes unless otherwise permitted; authority for the ministry to apply for a court order to permit retaining items seized that may lead to a Tobacco Tax Act contravention; and provisions that aligned certain penalties imposed on persons convicted of offences under the Tobacco Tax Act.

As a result of tougher enforcement measures introduced by this government since 2004—I'd like to also share some of those: The Ministry of Revenue's inspectors and investigators have seized 150 million illegal cigarettes, 978,000 untaxed cigars and 47 million grams of fine-cut tobacco between April 1, 2008, and March 31, 2011. Penalties assessed against those violating the Tobacco Tax Act total more than \$18.7 million since March 2006.

With Bill 186 introduced, I'm proud to say that this is the sixth out of eight years that this government has taken steps to strengthen enforcement against the illegal manufacture, distribution, sale and purchase of tobacco products. If Bill 186 is passed, our legislation would do five key things: First, it would transfer the responsibility for licensing raw leaf tobacco from the Ontario Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers' Marketing Board to the Ministry of Revenue. It would also license raw leaf tobacco importers to ensure that there is a level playing field for all raw leaf tobacco suppliers. Secondly, the bill proposes to set a revised fine structure to reflect possession of small amounts of contraband tobacco. Thirdly, for the first time, we would require fine-cut tobacco to be marked for better enforcement. Fourth, this bill would authorize police to seize illegal tobacco in plain view. Lastly, it would strengthen our relationship with First Nations leaders.

First, let's talk about the raw leaf. This bill would reduce the risk of Ontario raw leaf tobacco being used to manufacture illegal tobacco products by expanding regulation to include all types of raw leaf tobacco grown in, and imported into, Ontario. This would include fully and partially processed flue-cured burley and black or dark raw leaf tobacco.

Currently, flue-cured raw leaf tobacco cannot be grown or sold in Ontario unless legitimate sales contracts are in place with buyers who are licensed as required under federal and Ontario laws. However, raw leaf tobacco can end up in the possession of Ontario manufacturers who produce illegal tobacco products if: an Ontario producer sells it illegally; secondly, a legitimately licensed buyer exports raw leaf tobacco and it re-enters Ontario as an illegal import; thirdly, a licensed buyer or manufacturer uses some of its raw leaf tobacco to produce illegal products; or lastly, raw leaf tobacco grown outside Ontario is imported for use by illegal manufacturers.

We would work with our partner ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the agricultural community to ensure that there is a smooth transition that recognizes business operating requirements. New registrants who are not part of the current system would be identified and consulted. Lead time would also be needed to develop an electronic registry system to make the registration process more efficient for those involved in the tobacco-growing sector.

I'd now like to talk a little bit about the revised fine structure. The amendments propose, in Bill 186, a new fine structure for persons convicted of possessing small amounts of illegal tobacco products. The proposed fine structure for illegal cigarettes is: \$100 plus three times the tax for possession of up to 200 illegal cigarettes, for a maximum fine of \$174.10; \$250 plus three times the tax for possession of between 201 and 1,000 illegal cigarettes, for a maximum fine of \$620.50; and \$500 plus three times the tax for possession of between 1,001 and 10,000 illegal cigarettes, for a maximum fine of \$4,205.

The current fine structure would continue to apply to individuals convicted of possessing more than 10,000 illegal cigarettes and for those with any amount for the purpose of sale.

Michael Perley, of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, said that the proposed fines are a step forward in deterring individuals who want to buy illegal cigarettes. The Canadian Press recently quoted him as saying, "By buying a \$15 bag of cigarettes, you wind up paying \$175 for it. That's a lesson that somebody won't soon forget."

Next, the legislation further proposes to have fine-cut tobacco marked in a similar fashion as to how legal cigarettes are marked. This would make it easier for enforcement officers to identify legal versus illegal fine-cut tobacco. When this provision does take place—hopefully takes place—police officers would be further authorized to seize illegal, unmarked, fine-cut tobacco in plain view. Another proposal contained in the legislation would authorize police officers to seize without delay—and that is



key: without delay—unmarked cigarettes in plain view. Currently, they have to contact the Ministry of Revenue to seek authorization to make the seizure.

0940

If passed, we will work with our police partners to ensure the effective implementation of these provisions.

Our government is pleased that the steps we've taken to strengthen tobacco enforcement over many years have not gone unnoticed. For example, and I wish to share this with the members of the House, on April 23, a Toronto Star editorial stated, "Since 2004, Ontario's Liberal government has taken many important steps to reduce tobacco use and discourage young people from picking up the addictive and deadly habit...."

"The government's new bill tackling contraband tobacco offers ... new measures to make people think twice about buying contraband cigarettes" and makes it "easier for police to crack down on the trade"—all well worthwhile.

Because illegal tobacco is a complex matter, this government remains committed to working with our partners to strengthen the enforcement of tobacco laws. We work closely with our federal colleagues, various police services and other partners on a regular basis to investigate and seize illegal tobacco products. In fact, the Cornwall Regional Task Force is an excellent example of how the Ontario government works with the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP, along with the OPP and local police services, to address illegal tobacco.

In 2010, the task force, of which the Ministry of Revenue is a member, successfully confiscated the following items involved in smuggling illegal tobacco: more than \$6 million in illegal tobacco products, more than \$660,000 in currency, 181 vehicles, 17 vessels and 22 trailers, with a combined value of more than \$2 million.

As the federal government has jurisdiction over borders and border enforcement, the Ministry of Revenue and the Ontario Provincial Police participate in the RCMP-led integrated border enforcement teams. They target cross-border criminal activity at Cornwall, Kingston, Niagara Falls, Windsor and Sault Ste. Marie. In addition, Ontario is in discussions with the Canada Revenue Agency, Public Safety Canada and Revenu Québec to advance co-operation on matters of common concern.

An integral part of the Bill 186 legislation is to strengthen our very important relationships with First Nations. If enacted, the Minister of Revenue would be permitted, in certain circumstances, to share Tobacco Tax Act information with First Nations' elected councils and make arrangements and agreements with these councils for administering and enforcing the Tobacco Tax Act on reserves.

Currently, the Ministry of Revenue is engaged with several First Nations leaders to hear ideas and concerns they have about tobacco on reserves. To further the government's understanding of tobacco issues on reserves, the ministry will be further engaging First Nations leaders and listening to their views on tobacco issues and their ideas for solutions. These ongoing and expanded discus-

sions are important steps the government is taking to ensure that the interests of First Nations are part of the government's effort to address the complex issues related to illegal tobacco.

With Bill 186, we are taking the next steps to help protect young people from the dangers of tobacco. Proposals contained in the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act provide positive, realistic and balanced measures that would move us forward in our drive to reduce smoking across Ontario. We expect that this legislation would result in a meaningful, positive impact on controlling the supply and reducing the use of illegal tobacco in Ontario. This legislation is an important next step in reducing youth smoking rates, yet we must continue to be vigilant.

I believe that the measures contained in Bill 186 are the right ones, at the right time, that would make a real difference. I look forward to working with my colleagues in every party to make this bill law. Our kids are counting on all of us to pass this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'm certainly pleased to rise and speak to the second reading of our government's proposed Bill 186, the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011. I want to thank my colleague Minister Aggelonitis for her work in this regard.

It is essential to recognize that Bill 186 is part of our whole-of-government approach to renewing and building on the significant foundation of the smoke-free Ontario strategy. Without a doubt, since 2005, the smoke-free Ontario strategy has embodied one of North America's most comprehensive anti-smoking initiatives.

Although today we focus on how far we have come and where we are going, I certainly feel compelled to remind this Legislature that many members opposite, including the leader of the official opposition, voted against our powerful tool to fight tobacco, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Nevertheless, I am pleased to advise this Legislature that despite the party opposite's lack of vision and support of this important, multi-faceted strategy, it has successfully discouraged young people from starting to smoke.

Our strategy has supported cessation efforts for smokers who want to quit; educated and raised awareness of the dangers of smoking cigarettes; prevented and discouraged Ontarians from starting to smoke; and it has made smoke-free environments the law in our province.

The party opposite is so out of touch that their member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant stated, "The jury is out on second-hand smoke." The member was speaking about the effects of second-hand smoke on individuals. The member obviously has not heard of Heather Crowe, who died in 2006 from years of exposure to second-hand smoke and who was a fearless supporter of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. We will continue to protect Ontarians from the dangers of second-hand smoke, and certainly we honour the memory of Heather Crowe.



Today, 99% of bars, restaurants and other enclosed workplaces in the province are smoke-free, thanks to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. When the Hudak PCs voted against that legislation in 2005, they rejected smoke-free environments. In fact, they rejected better health.

**Interjection:** No.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Yes.

Our government has made sure that cigarettes can no longer be openly displayed at convenience stores, removing a temptation that might draw in would-be smokers. I would like to thank the MPP for Ottawa-Orléans for his tireless efforts on this particular initiative.

Our government has paid special attention to protecting our most precious resource, our children—indeed, our future—from the dangers of cigarette smoking, and that is precisely the reason why we banned smoking in motor vehicles when children 16 years of age and under are present. And again, like the 80% of Ontarians who supported our direction in this regard, I was astounded that opposition members railed against this move right up until the moment they voted for it. The current PC leader said at the time, “I don’t think” it “will make that much of a difference.” His colleague the member for Thornhill actually called our initiative “moron legislation.”

0950

Indeed, our children are also the reason our government passed legislation prohibiting the selling and distribution of flavoured cigarillos in Ontario. We are protecting our children from products designed to lure young people into smoking.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** And you guys can make jokes about it, but the young people are the future of our province.

We are committed to taking appropriate and effective action if we find that the tobacco industry is introducing new cigarillo products aimed at tempting children or adolescents. I found it rather bizarre that four PC members voted against this move as well—unbelievable—and, judging from the action across the way here today, it obviously looks to me like they don’t care about Ontario’s children.

I think it would be—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order: I would ask that the minister, if she wants “honourable” in front of her name, withdraw the statement she just made. As a mother, I’m sitting on this side of House with a grandfather, I’m sitting with another father and another father with grandchildren. That was despicable. I understand partisanship, but she should—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. There is nothing out of order in the minister’s comments.

Minister of Health Promotion, you have the floor.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** As I said—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Point of order: I’m asking the minister to apologize for the comment that she has made. If she does not, I will ensure that she does not continue this debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** There’s nothing out of order. It’s up to the minister to make whatever comments she would like, as long as they’re parliamentary.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On a point of order: As a grandfather, I am really insulted by the minister across the aisle. I believe that if she is an honourable minister—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Okay. Please have your seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. Member for Oxford.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Member for Halton, come to order. The minister has the floor. Minister?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I would remind the members opposite that I am entitled to be in the Legislature just as much as they are. And—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Point of order: What she doesn’t have to right to do is insult and impugn motives in this place, and if she does not have the character, as a minister, to stand in her place and apologize for a comment that she knows is wrong—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order again. I don’t find anything that the minister said out of order. She’s entitled to her opinion. I’m here to facilitate free speech. We may disagree from time to time, but please let the Minister of Health Promotion have the floor and have her say.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I must say, it’s unbelievable, the conduct of the members opposite. They obviously don’t care about—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is this a new point of order?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This is a new point of order: She’s just impugning motive, and again she’s insulted the official opposition benches. I assume she’s also insulted the third party—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. I’ve ruled on this point of order and I don’t see a new point of order. The minister is entitled to her opinion and she does have the floor.

Minister.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Actions truly speak louder than words, and their failure to support protective legislation relating to cigarettes speaks clearly about how they care about Ontario’s children. In the words of the young people, I would say, “Not”—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Are you just purposely interrupting the minister or do you have a new point of order?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** She continues to try to insult the official opposition. It's clearly unparliamentary language, and it goes against the spirit of the standing orders.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I'm going to rule that you may not like what the minister is saying, but I don't find anything that she's saying unparliamentary, and I don't believe she's using unparliamentary language, so I cannot rule in favour of your point of order.

Minister—and please, I'm not going to hear any more points of order on this. I'm not going to recognize you—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** And you're not going to argue with the Chair, or I'm going to throw you out of this place.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, she doesn't have a right to say that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The member for Oxford will come to order. The minister has the floor. Please allow her her right to free speech.

Minister.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Our children are the reason we have taken the many steps we have. That said, let me assure you that our government is continuing our work in protecting the health of Ontario's children. If passed, Bill 186 will further shield our young people from this harmful habit and provide important means to save the lives of more Ontarians.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario.

*Interruption.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Come to order. Order.

The House will take a five-minute recess.

*The House recessed from 0956 to 1001.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** If I may just make a comment, I would ask all members to be respectful of each other. While I did not hear anything unparliamentary in what the minister said, I would ask us all to try to be kind to each other and respectful.

The minister does have the floor. The Minister of Health Promotion and Sport.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** We are working across government to support additional action that builds on the smoke-free Ontario strategy. Our government is committed to working with our partners and stakeholders—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. Order. Members of the official opposition will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. If the honourable members won't come to order, I will have no choice but to name the honourable members.

Thank you. The Minister of Health Promotion.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** We will continue to address the recommendations provided in the October 2010 report of the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Again, I will have to name the honourable members, and you will not be able to participate for the rest of the day.

Minister of Health Promotion.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The passage of Bill 186 would be an important building block in the work of the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport to help prevent young people from becoming addicted to tobacco and on our work to date on the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Under this government, the smoke-free Ontario strategy has earned international recognition as a pioneer in the battle against tobacco use. The additional steps that I have outlined will build on this legacy by fostering a healthier province, and save more lives. If passed, Bill 186 will further shield our young people from this harmful habit and provide important means to save the lives of more Ontarians.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario. Every year, it claims the lives of 13,000 people in this province. Smoking accounts for three times the combined deaths caused by alcohol, drugs, suicide, murder and car crashes. Smoking costs every single Ontarian. Smoking is, in fact, killing our families, our neighbours, our friends, our co-workers and our loved ones.

Tobacco-related disease costs the province's economy \$7.73 billion every year—\$1.93 billion in direct health care costs and \$5.8 billion in productivity losses. This is an incredible drain on Ontario's health care resources.

Suffice it to say that the human and financial costs of smoking and tobacco-related disease are staggering. That is why, over the past six years, our government has focused on supporting Ontarians to make informed choices, to protect and to improve their health and to save their own lives.

Programs and initiatives that discourage people from starting to smoke, and support for smokers in quitting, have always co-existed with legislative prohibitions within the smoke-free Ontario strategy. Similarly, the introduction of Bill 186 has coincided with the government announcing steps to further protect children and youth, including: resources to increase prevention efforts focused on protecting our young people; engaging youth to develop youth-led tobacco prevention initiatives; undertaking critical research to determine what works in reference to deterring young people from using tobacco products; and using this information to design and implement innovative, sustained and effective efforts to prevent youth from becoming addicted.

By providing more youth-focused resources and new innovative approaches to reach and involve the young people in our ongoing efforts, we will prevent even more young people from starting to use tobacco products in the first place. The outreach programs will include connecting with teenagers through youth engagement coordinators, working in each of the 36 public health units in the province, to support young people around tobacco con-



trol activities in their communities. The province's enhanced efforts to reduce tobacco use provide opportunities to encourage smokers in general to quit, through a series of new or expanding supports.

Let me clearly state that smoking is not—and I repeat: not—a lifestyle choice. Smoking is an addiction. The addiction to nicotine has been compared to addictions to heroin and cocaine. In fact, it is one of the toughest addictions to break, and we see that smokers rarely succeed in quitting on their first try. Effective cessation programs are crucial to supporting smokers on this difficult journey.

In fact, our government-supported initiatives have already assisted more than 1.25 million people to quit smoking since 2005, including: the Driven to Quit Challenge, the Leave the Pack Behind program, the Smokers' Helpline and Smokers' Helpline online STOP program, collaboration and support for the grassroots work of local public health units, and our recent collaboration with family health teams. These are just a few of the cessation initiatives that Ontario, in cross-sectoral partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, has made available to help smokers.

In 2010-11, the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport invested over \$6 million in smoking cessation programs and \$2.67 million in cessation marketing campaigns, social marketing campaigns such as the Canadian Cancer Society's Driven to Quit Challenge, the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Persistence campaign, and the Ontario Lung Association's Quit and Get Fit.

The Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group, established by the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, as well as the scientific advisory committee organized by the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, called for a comprehensive cessation system.

Mr. Michael Perley of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco has written to us, saying that he is "very pleased by your recent announcement that the province will strengthen the Tobacco Tax Act," and to "express our appreciation for your personal support of this critically important initiative."

Our government is also expanding and improving supports to provide smokers with many more doors of access to get the help they need to kick the nasty habit. Our approach includes smoking cessation counselling in health care settings, including family health teams and other health professionals; collaborating with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to deliver cessation services and cessation drugs; providing targeted help for smokers with chronic diseases who are in hospitals; expanding access to nicotine replacement therapies through primary care providers; and working with trade associations, employers and unions to provide workplace information and supports to employees who wish to quit smoking, more particularly in workplaces where smoking represents an increased risk.

1010

The Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport is currently investing a total of \$42.8 million in tobacco cess-

ation, prevention and protection programs. The province has announced that it is investing an additional \$5 million, an increase of more than 11%, to strengthen our ongoing efforts to prevent youth from starting to smoke and to support smokers in quitting. We are confident this new investment will focus on the priorities that will have the greatest impact on reducing smoking prevalence rates. These tips, coupled with the crackdown on illegal tobacco as proposed by Bill 186, will collectively reinvestigate the excellent work which has—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today, the Minister of Health Promotion made comments in this House that, quite frankly, I believe, were not only inappropriate but certainly unparliamentary—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** And highly offensive.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —and highly offensive to every member of the Progressive Conservative caucus, those who have children or grandchildren being specifically cited.

The tradition in this House, and it has been repeated by the Speaker on many occasions, is that when comments are made by a member of this House that result in grave disorder, they are generally deemed inappropriate and unparliamentary. By the very nature that they caused the disorder, it clearly indicates that there is something wrong and something offensive about those comments.

The comments by the Minister of Health Promotion—I will paraphrase, because I was not here present for the remarks, but I'm quite aware of the grave disorder that resulted from those remarks—were to the effect that members of the Progressive Conservative caucus do not care about their children or their grandchildren.

Speaker, there's not a person in this province who, if someone implied to them that they didn't care about their children or their grandchildren—if they had grandchildren—would not take personal offence to it and would not stand up and defend themselves and ask that person who made those comments, as a lady or a gentleman, to please retract them. Anyone, for the purpose of common decency, would, as that kind of person, retract them.

This is not a place to personally insult other members. This is a place to debate legislation. Each and every one of us comes here with that belief: that legislation that is debated in this House, if properly tabled, properly amended—that at the end of the day, we have something that benefits people in the province of Ontario. This is not a place to personally insult members of this House who have children or grandchildren, and I think that member, that minister, should apologize to this House and should apologize to the people of Ontario for taking debate to that level. It is beneath her. It is beneath this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** On the same point of order, the honourable member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Speaker, surely a member in this House, in a debate around an issue so non-partisan as this issue, who is seeking support of the whole House, when



this sort of event occurs, be it advertently or inadvertently, especially a member of the executive, would simply stand up, say, "I withdraw," and apologize and then move on. Then it no longer becomes an issue and it no longer stands as an issue. It seems to me that that is what an experienced and honourable member of the chamber would do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. I did rule at the time on the comments of the minister. However, I do agree that disorder did occur and I would give the honourable minister an opportunity to withdraw those comments.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm surprised at the ruling on this, considering—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I'm making a ruling. My ruling was that I didn't find anything unparliamentary or out of order, but I am giving the honourable minister an opportunity to withdraw those comments.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to know from you if you would like me to withdraw just the comment relating to the children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Yes. I believe that was the comment that members took offence to.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment relating to the children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted today to welcome to the House one of the Ordre de la Pléiade recipients yesterday, a great representative of the francophone community in my region, Marguerite Martel. Madame Martel is here today with her two daughters, Doris Storie and Gisele Martel. Her other daughter, Carol Melanson, is not with us today but watching on TV, so good morning to Carol.

We welcome them here today and we congratulate her again on the Ordre de la Pléiade.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm delighted to introduce my constituent Katie Neu and her friend Andrew Dean. They're here today to observe the debate on Bill 183.

Katie is very famous in this country. She is one of the co-sponsors of Blue Day, an effort to prevent bullying of our children anywhere, but particularly in schools. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm really pleased today to have a number of guests from my riding of Niagara Falls and from Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake. I'd like to start by introducing two guests from Niagara-on-the-Lake—

they're in the members' gallery—Paolo Miele, and with him is Phil Lebodac. They're both from Niagara-on-the-Lake. Enjoy your time up here, and you'll see how wonderful, how passionate and how we care about each other up here.

As well, I'd like to recognize—and you can't miss them—good friends of mine from Fort Erie. They have their special yellow shirts on. It's getting close to summer and it's sunshine weather, so they're here to brighten up Parliament.

I want to also recognize another good friend of mine, Wayne Gates. Wayne Gates is the president of CAW 199. He's also a member of Niagara Falls city council, newly elected. To all of my guests, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am very, very pleased to welcome to the Legislature today representatives from the Association of Ontario Midwives. I want to issue a very special welcome to Allyson Booth. She is the treasurer of the association but, more importantly, she is the midwife who caught my grandson Paxon as he was born just four weeks ago.

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** Following up on the comments of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, it gives me great pleasure to introduce my daughter Carla Sorbara, who is in the public gallery, and who is not only one of Ontario's outstanding midwives but the mother of three very outstanding grandchildren whom I have the honour of being a part of.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Staff and students from G.L. Roberts are about to join us in the gallery. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome two longtime friends of mine, Helen and Glynn Cole—welcome to Queen's Park—seated in the Speaker's gallery. Enjoy question period today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Records from the labour board reveal that Premier McGuinty cut a deal with leaders of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union to top up their salaries. The secret deal kicks in after the next election. The labour board records also show that the Premier sent government lawyers to fight to keep the deal with OPSEU secret from the public.

Now that Premier McGuinty got caught and the deal is exposed, will you tell the people of Ontario how much they are paying for the secret deal with OPSEU?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The government of Ontario routinely negotiates collective agreements with a variety of bargaining agents. The agreements are subject to a mandate that is set by the treasury board. It is then negotiated by senior officials on behalf of the government,



and an agreement is reached eventually, hopefully without labour disruption and other tactics that are used in order to facilitate collective bargaining.

In this case, the deal was executed, shared with union leaders across the province and shared now at the labour board. This constitutes a fair deal over four years in which the government stood up for the taxpayers' interests.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Your own lawyers called the Premier's deal with OPSEU "a secret deal." That was in the arguments they presented.

Based on the spending figures from public accounts, Ontario families are on the hook for tens of millions of dollars to pay for Premier McGuinty's secret deal.

Everything about this secret deal to hand out a secret pay increase shows that Premier McGuinty will do anything to stay in power. He sent you to do the dog-and-pony show and pretend wage restraints were coming, but he knew all along there was a secret deal to top up the salaries of 38,000 OPSEU employees by an extra 1% that kicks in after the election. How many other secret deals did Premier McGuinty cut on behalf of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Acting Premier?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, there was no secret deal. Side letters are quite common in these circumstances. The overall settlements are down across the public and broader public sectors. This government, through its negotiating process, routinely does what it needs to do to protect taxpayer interests. At the end of the day, agreements are reached and arrived at. There are oftentimes side accords.

We will continue to negotiate with our bargaining partners across the public and broader public sectors as we protect the interests of taxpayers across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Minister, Ontario families want relief, but Premier McGuinty wants to spend their money on secret deals. Behind closed doors, he cuts a secret deal to increase wages, and when others learn about it, they dispatch lawyers to bury the secret even deeper. I ask you once again to show some respect for the taxpayers.

Here's an example: You did a phony PR scheme to say you would freeze public sector wages, but the money—back in health care—or cutting secret deals that kick in after the election, or fighting tooth and nail to keep secret deals covered up. Why don't you come clean with the people of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment that he made, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I withdraw that.

Why don't you come clean with the people of Ontario? Tell them how much they're paying for this secret deal.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What the member hasn't reported is the following: As part of this agreement, we cut costs by 1.25%. You know what we got in this deal? Here are the facts. The union agreed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford. The member from Halton.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The union agreed to eliminate termination pay. The union eliminated the ability to bank things like overtime. We changed automatic access—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Halton. The member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I didn't say anything.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Oxford, you just did. The member from Halton.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You don't have to worry about termination pay; you don't fire anyone—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Renfrew.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Leeds will withdraw the comment that he's just made.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Withdrawn.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The savings exceeded the 1% and represent a good deal for Ontario taxpayers, and we will continue to negotiate in a proper manner to not compromise the taxpayers' interests.

Their story is half-cocked, half wrong and incomplete. We will put the record forward and defend what saves taxpayers money and will continue to negotiate deals like that to lower the cost of the public sector as we transform government right across the province.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Back to the Acting Premier: The Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario, AMAPCEO, says that it used the public part of the OPSEU deal as a benchmark for its own contract, but they would have held out for more money if they had known about Premier McGuinty's secret deal with OPSEU. I'll bet other unions and arbitrators feel the same way. It's only a matter of time before they say that settled deals should be reopened to reflect the OPSEU secret deal.

How did Premier McGuinty pick which public sector unions will get these secret pay increases and which ones he wouldn't buy off? If the deal is so sweet—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that she just made.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was the member opposite who pointed out that this complaint arose from a union that doesn't think it got a big enough raise in their last agreement. My hope is, now that AMAPCEO—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We cut more than 1% in costs, including the elimination of termination pay. That was not reported. We eliminated the ability to bank things like overtime. That was not reported. And we changed the automatic access to factor 80. So if AMAPCEO wants to give us those concessions, we'll gladly accept them.

Instead of defending AMAPCEO, why don't you defend taxpayers and acknowledge a deal that is fair to the union, fair to management and builds on our track record of good labour relations in tough times?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Somewhere along the way the minister lost truth, but I just must—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** That's twice, Lisa. Apologize.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I don't need assistance from the government side.

The member will withdraw the comment she has just made.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn, Mr. Speaker. But it shows how out of touch that Acting Premier and Premier McGuinty are: that they actually sent out a government official to say that keeping the deal a secret cost taxpayers less money. They actually think they've saved money because other unions settled for less as a result of the secret deal. It's only a matter of time before other unions are going to line up with AMAPCEO and fight to get their deals reopened.

How much more money will Ontario families—taxpayers all of them—have to pay because Dalton McGuinty decided that this secret deal—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the honourable member about the use of names; she should be using titles.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, the government she was part of did very similar agreements. Let me give you two examples. They gave a union a me-too clause for factor 80, which means they would have the ability to retire early with a pension, after a similar deal was negotiated with another union. That's one. I'll take her through some of the other examples further on in question period.

If these other unions are prepared to eliminate termination pay, if they are prepared to eliminate the ability to bank things like overtime, if they are prepared to change automatic access to factor 80 if staff are surplus, then yes, we would welcome that.

This deal in fact saved taxpayers 1.25% versus the 1% wage increase, which was a fair exchange and builds on our track record of lowering the overall cost of public wage settlements in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This is a government that wouldn't know how to lower the costs of government ever. They've never, ever done it. Teachers, nurses and other broader public sector unions still have to negotiate their collective agreements. At least publicly, Premier

McGuinty will say that he expects teachers and nurses to freeze their wages, but who knows how they'll feel now that Premier McGuinty's secret deal to top up the wages with other public sector unions is public? Or maybe he whispers something more reassuring in their ears when they get behind closed doors.

You strike secret deals, and it's Ontario families who ultimately pay. How many more secret deals will Ontario families have to pay for Premier McGuinty's quid pro quo with public sector unions?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Part of this very public deal is the elimination of termination pay, the elimination of the ability to bank things like overtime, and changing automatic access to factor 80 of staff for surplus. I'll remind the members opposite that we had reduced the number of positions by 1,500 by 2010.

The final point I would make is that the last agreement that the party opposite reached with OPSEU, signed in January—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe North will withdraw the comment that he made.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Withdrawn, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The last agreement reached by the previous government in January 2002: 11.45% over three years. This deal represented 9% over four years. We are bringing down the average rate of settlement; we're doing it without strikes; we're working with our partners. They want to go back to the bad old days of strikes and fights. We're negotiating good deals that are good deals for the taxpayers. In this case, we saved the taxpayers a lot more money than the 1% that was put on the table.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, in British Columbia, a government-appointed independent panel revealed that the BC government had oversold the impact of the HST by making inflated claims about job creation and suggesting that families would be no worse off.

Since the Ontario government has made the very same claims, would the Acting Premier finally agree that he and his government have oversold the impact of the HST here in Ontario as well?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The British Columbia deal for taxpayers was much different than the HST in Ontario. The government of British Columbia did not take the money given to them by the federal Conservative government and give it back to taxpayers. The British Columbia government did not cut personal taxes. They did not cut the small business tax rate, and they did not cut the corporate taxes that are helping our forestry and auto sectors get back on their feet. It was a much different deal.

We're seeing the results: 93% of jobs lost during the downturn are back. The deal is the right deal for tax-



payers. It is about growing the economy, and it's about a brighter future for our children.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There is actually a way to resolve this. In BC, the government appointed an independent panel to determine the impact of the HST. So here's a challenge for the Acting Premier: If he truly believes what he says about his unfair HST, will he create an independent panel to review the tax and report back to Ontario families before October 6? Will the Acting Premier do that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. We've already had a variety of studies done by a variety of economists from both sides of the spectrum. We have the support of a number of organizations. I'll remind you, the work done by Professor Mintz was peer-reviewed by a number of his colleagues—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just say to the member from Renfrew and the member from Oxford: During the rotation these are NDP questions. The NDP would like to hear the answers, and your interjections are making it extremely difficult for the leader of the third party to hear.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** A variety of other reports; people like Hugh Mackenzie and others have come out with it. It's the right policy for Ontario. The tax cuts for low-income Ontarians are quite appropriate in the circumstances. The sales tax credits are appropriate. This is the right public policy to build a stronger and better economy for Ontario's future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I was actually referring to an independent panel. I guess the Acting Premier didn't hear that.

1050

But let's be clear. Just like the BC Liberal government, the McGuinty Liberals claimed that the HST would create jobs. Just like the BC Liberal government, the McGuinty Liberals claimed that the HST wouldn't cost families more. Both of these claims have been proven to be false in BC, and they are well on their way to being proven false here in Ontario. So why won't the Acting Premier, then, do exactly what was done in BC and create that independent panel to review the HST? What is he afraid of?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There have been 10 published reports on the HST that are independent. I can assure you that people like Professor Mintz at the University of Calgary are quite independent from this government. Hugh Mackenzie of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is quite independent from this government. They have concluded the following: that this is the right tax package; that this, in fact, puts money in people's pockets, particularly low-income Ontarians.

What everybody's waiting to know: Instead of tip-toeing around it, will the leader of the NDP say she's

going to cancel the HST, or will she do what the NDP did in Nova Scotia and raise it by two points? That's the only question that's outstanding. Ten independent reports, studied to death: right policy, more jobs, better future.

## SMART METERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier. With each passing day, it becomes clearer that the Premier's smart meter program is in chaos. The Ontario Energy Board has just approved EnWin Utilities' request to delay implementation of time-of-use pricing until December 1, 2012. That's a full 18 months after the mandatory deadline of June 30, 2011.

Can the Acting Premier tell us how many other local utilities are going to miss the mandatory deadline?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member doesn't really know what she's referring to here. We have implemented 4.6 million smart meters across this country. The fact is, that is the best implementation program in the entire world.

No jurisdiction has modernized their energy system as effectively, efficiently, on time and on budget as we have here in this province. Two million customers across this province are now on time-of-use. By the end of June, three million will be on. Likely by the end of the year, there will be a majority of Ontario families on. By any reasonable standard, that's an extraordinary implementation and modernization of an energy system, and there's not a jurisdiction in the world that rivals that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This government's smart meter program is also running badly over budget. As of last September, an audit revealed that the billion dollars budgeted for the entire program had already been spent, yet not even one half of the planned smart meters had been hooked up to time-of-use billing.

With companies like EnWin in Windsor requiring an additional 18 months past the deadline to complete the transition to time-of-use billing, what is this Acting Premier's best estimate of how much over budget the disastrous smart meter program is going to eventually be? Will it be 20% over budget? Will it be 30% over budget? Will it be 50% over budget?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the leader of the third party has an obligation to be straightforward with Ontarians. The fact of the matter is—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

I appreciate the assistance from both sides of the House in trying to deal with issues as they arise in the chamber. I would remind members on both sides that comments do get made in here that cause disorder in the House, and disorder is not helpful.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's not helpful for anyone in the chamber. I'm going to ask the minister to withdraw the comment that he just made, please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, an unequivocal withdrawal.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm happy to withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

The leader of the opposition continues to use information that's not correct. I think it is very important that Ontario families have correct information. The time-of-use program, the smart meter program, is being implemented on time; it's on budget. It's good news for Ontarians because it is improving our system.

That leader has been leader for 778 days. What Ontario families deserve to know is: Do you support our efforts to modernize our energy system or do you not? Do you support our efforts to get out of dirty coal and replace it with clean sources of energy? Yes or no?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On top of all this, Ontario families aren't benefiting from the government's smart meter program. Early reports suggest that most people are unable to shift their hydro use and are not getting a break on price.

Here's the big picture: Implementation is running badly behind schedule, the program is hundreds of millions of dollars over budget and the vast majority of Ontarians are getting no benefit whatsoever from the program. When will this government finally admit that its smart meter program has been a disaster and simply doesn't work?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This leader of the third party continues to put forward information that is factually incorrect. She can do that if she wants to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. You can find different ways to be critical of the member. Language like that isn't helpful. I just ask you to withdraw that, please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** An unequivocal withdrawal.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I thought that was, but I withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure how I can disagree with the member here in this Legislature, but I'll do my very best. The member—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Durham will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Withdraw.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think what Ontario families need to know is, after 778 days as leader of the third party, what do that member and her party want to do to modernize our energy system? We need to modernize our energy system if we want to meet the needs of Ontario families into the future. And yet, you have fought us every step of the way and offered no alternative in place of what we're doing. Modernizing our energy system is an important part of building a strong, reliable, modern

energy system, and an important part of getting out of dirty coal and replacing it with cleaner sources of power. Why does the NDP stand in opposition to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is also to the Acting Premier. On page 1 of the application to keep the public from seeing the secret side deal you cut with OPSEU, you argue how transparent you are. That's as absurd as saying that hydro bills are going down. Honestly, I can't make this stuff up. On page 3 of the application you call the side deal with OPSEU "the secret deal"; and I quote again, "the secret increase."

You used to at least try to dodge and deflect and stonewall. Now you're too out of gas to even do that. How soon until you start calling eHealth and LHINS "boondoggles" and your HST a "greedy tax grab"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The deal that eliminated termination pay, eliminated the ability to bank things like overtime and changed automatic access to factor 80 if staff are surplus in fact saved taxpayers money. These types of arrangements through side letters to collective agreements are relatively common. This particular agreement was shared across the province with all locals and with management. It's important to understand the give-and-take that goes on in collective bargaining. This deal represented a savings for Ontario taxpayers. It gave the government the ability to negotiate, which is important for the government in order that we can protect the taxpayer interest. If other unions want a similar concession package, we'll be happy to talk to them about it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Premier McGuinty is out of gas and out of touch with Ontario families, who cannot afford his sweetheart deals that even government lawyers are calling "secret." They can't afford the money you waste trying to keep the Premier's secret deal a permanent secret. Even if you won't save the money you spend on secret deals to top up wages, you could have at least saved all of that money you wasted on pesky lawyers who end up admitting that it is a secret deal for a secret pay increase after all. Wouldn't it have been cheaper, Acting Premier, and more subtle, just to stand outside of polling stations and hand out cash?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Thornhill will withdraw that last comment that he made.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Withdrawn, Speaker.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's certainly a lot of gas on the other side of the House.

This deal saved taxpayers. We have eliminated termination pay for the affected bargaining unit. We've eliminated the ability to bank things like overtime—something that you folks have called for, by the way. We've changed



automatic access to factor 80. We saved taxpayers 1.25%; the deal was 1% in cash. Instead, it's the right deal; it represents how bargaining should work. The employer needs to have the ability to negotiate the way we negotiated because we stood up for taxpayers.

If he wants to reopen deals and give unions more, that's his business. We want to bargain collectively and get a good deal for taxpayers and a good deal for the fine people who work in our public service right across Ontario.

## OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Acting Premier. This afternoon, we will be debating my Ombudsman bill, Bill 183. The bill would give the Ombudsman the power to oversee the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, universities, hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes.

We know that there are problems with these institutions because the Ombudsman received 4,000 complaints about them in 2010. We also know this because people call us every week from across the province to voice their horror stories. In fact, many of them are here, many of them came to the press conference this morning, they're here for this question period and they're going to be here for the debate this afternoon. That's how painful the stories are. They're parents, children, patients and the elderly, and they have nowhere to turn when the system fails them.

When will the government finally acknowledge that there are serious problems with our public—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Acting Premier.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I understand that it's a private member's bill. The House will have the opportunity to vote on that this afternoon as, during private members' hours, members have the ability to vote as they see fit.

I'll ask some of my colleagues to address the specifics of this as we move forward into the supplementary, but our government is very proud of its record on access to—for instance, we extended freedom of information across a variety of institutions that weren't there before. We created a greater power for the auditor. He's now looking, for instance, at our last budget to look at the projections into the future.

I'll look forward to hearing the verdict of the House on this private bill and look forward to the ability of all members to cast their ballots either for or against this particular legislation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The people who are here and those who could not come are looking to you, the Premier and your government to validate their pain, to say, "We hear you," to give them a voice because many of them are voiceless. And you say, "Wait for the debate this afternoon and see what the verdict is." They're waiting for you to take action. You don't even need to hear my bill; you can do it today.

Last April, I asked the Minister of Children and Youth Services why she was adamantly against Ombudsman oversight over children's aid societies. The minister's response was that the Child and Family Services Review Board has oversight powers over children's aid societies. It seems that the minister was not aware at the time that that's no longer the case. In 2010, the Superior Court of Justice made a decision stating that the CFSRB does not have the power to hear certain CAS complaints. When will you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I look forward to debate today and I look forward to the views of members of the House.

I do want to remind the member opposite of some of the things that we have done in terms of accountability. First of all, we've expanded the sunshine list to include OPG and Hydro One. We gave the Auditor General an expanded role for value-for-money audits of the broader public sector, hospitals, universities and schools. We tightened the rules for travel and meals and made the Integrity Commissioner review the expenses of our 22 largest agencies. We provide a variety of supports and a variety of review mechanisms to people who access these services. I look forward to the response of the Legislature today to the member's bill—

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** That's appropriate.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —which is appropriate, as my colleague says. I congratulate the member for his passion in bringing this forward, and I look forward to the views of all of our colleagues on this legislation.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, public transit is one of the most important issues to the people in my riding, Bramalea-Gore-Malton. Many of my constituents commute daily to downtown Toronto for work and school. Often, this involves travelling on several transit systems: their local regional transit; GO Transit; and, more often than not, the Toronto transit system.

Minister, I understand that our government has been working to make it easier for my constituents—indeed, all Ontario residents—to travel within the greater Toronto area using a smart card. We are finally catching up to other world-class cities with the use of an electronic fare payment in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. I understand that Presto has been rolling out in various greater Toronto and Hamilton municipalities. Can the minister update the House on the progress made to date?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to thank the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton for the question. Presto is the first-ever regional fare card for public transit users in Ontario. As the member noted, there are electronic cards already in use in other jurisdictions. London, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Seattle and Holland all have smart cards, and commuters are able to use them to great success.

Mr. Presto—Mr. Speaker.



*Laughter.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I like Presto. I like to think of the Presto card as a mechanism for regionalism in the greater Toronto area. It's allowing people to move around the system seamlessly, without having to carry a number of different cards and tokens, and people are very keen on using it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** Thank you, Minister. This is great news for transit riders in those municipalities, and hopefully, the Presto card will encourage more people to leave their cars at home and take public transit to work or school.

It sounds like good progress has been made in getting GO Transit and local transit providers to use Presto in the places you have mentioned. I believe the agreement with the city of Toronto will help encourage the surrounding municipalities to move forward and integrate into the province's regional transit strategy.

However, the community of Brampton is still waiting to jump onto Presto. Can the minister tell my constituents in Bramalea-Gore-Malton when they can expect Presto to be in their communities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Already, 39,000 cards have been issued to transit riders and those cards have been used 3.5 million times, so people really want this. I'm happy to say that the city of Toronto is also working with us to implement Presto.

I'm very pleased to say to the member that Presto is going to be implemented in Brampton Transit in the coming weeks. It's coming to Brampton. It's already—today—being implemented, as I speak, at the Richmond Hill GO station and the Agincourt GO station.

As I said, this is a mechanism for regionalism. It's part of the culture shift in which we're involved, where we're getting people out of cars and onto public transit. We're making the biggest investments in transit in a generation, and the Presto card, the smart fare card, is part of that transition. People want it and we're delivering it across the GTA today, and it's coming to Brampton.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health. We've now learned that Premier McGuinty's priorities are very different than the ones of Ontario families. He is wasting public money on making secret deals and then hiring lawyers to keep Ontario families from knowing about them.

I can tell you, Ontario families want their hard-earned dollars spent on front-line health care. One priority is the reopening of the emergency room at Fort Erie Douglas Memorial Hospital, which our leader has promised to do.

I ask you: If Fort Erie families vote for the Liberals this fall, will you reopen the emergency room, or is the only way that it will be reopened is for those people to elect a Tim Hudak government?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to thank the member for this rather interesting question. What I can tell

you is that we are working very, very hard to improve care in the Niagara area. The new hospital in St. Catharines is on schedule. It will bring cancer treatment to the people of Niagara so they no longer will have to travel to Hamilton to get the care when they are fighting cancer.

There are many initiatives in the Niagara area that we are working on. I am delighted that the Yellow Shirt Brigade is with us here again today. I was very pleased to meet with some of the municipal leaders recently to discuss health care in the Niagara region.

I look forward to the supplementary.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Minister of Health: Yes, the members of the Yellow Shirt Brigade are here today. They, along with their families, their friends and the municipal leaders from across Niagara, are calling on this government for an independent investigation into the Niagara Health System. To date, they feel that no one has listened, and the health care cuts across Niagara are continuing.

Today will you show respect for these families who are calling for an independent investigation?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have nothing but the greatest of respect for the members of the Yellow Shirt Brigade and the other members in Niagara—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The minister and the member from the opposition seem to be having a disagreement. Debate is always healthy in this chamber, but we have a question and answer taking place, and this additional debate is interfering in that process. I would encourage those members, if they want to have that discussion, to take that discussion outside of the chamber, please.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to say that I find this question a bit mystifying, because it comes from a party that shut hospitals, that fired nurses when they had the chance when they were in government. This is also the party that has committed to cutting taxes. You cannot cut taxes without cutting health care. It is as easy as can be.

I can tell you that our government is committed to continuing to improve health care, to expand our family health teams and our nurse practitioner-led clinics, to drive wait times down and to improve the quality of care in this province.

They can't have it both ways. They can't say, "We're going to cut taxes and improve care." It cannot happen.

## FINANCEMENT DES COLLÈGES

### COLLEGE FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Depuis 2002, le Collège Boréal a un campus à Toronto. Depuis neuf ans, ils essaient de consolider leurs campus. Les francophones de Toronto veulent pouvoir poursuivre leur



formation collégiale en français et se tournent vers Boréal en grand nombre. Les salles de classe de Boréal sont pleines à craquer. Pourquoi est-ce que les besoins des apprenants et apprenantes francophones comptent si peu pour votre ministère qu'après neuf ans, Boréal n'a toujours pas les fonds d'opération nécessaires à la consolidation de son campus à Toronto?

**L'hon. John Milloy:** D'abord, j'aimerais dire qu'on continue de travailler avec le Collège Boréal pour s'adresser à la situation.

As the honourable member knows, we have a great commitment to francophone education throughout Ontario. Collège Boréal offers services in northern Ontario and in the south of Ontario. As I said, we continue to work with them to make sure that they can offer the best services to francophone students here in the south.

We have made it a priority to make sure that we reach out to students—aboriginal students, students with disabilities, francophone students—who wish to study in French, students who, in fact, have been under-represented in this system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça fait neuf ans. Le Collège Boréal a une proposition solide qui donnerait aux apprenants et apprenantes la chance de vivre une expérience collégiale comme dans tous les collèges anglophones. Pourquoi est-ce qu'au campus de Toronto, on n'a pas de cafétéria? On n'a pas de bibliothèque, on n'a pas d'espace de rassemblement; ils sont éparpillés un peu partout au travers de la ville de Toronto.

Quand est-ce que le ministre va reconnaître que les francophones en Ontario ont le droit à l'enseignement collégial en français équivalent à ce qui s'offre aux anglophones, et financer les fonds d'opération du campus de Boréal à Toronto?

**Hon. John Milloy:** We have invested billions of dollars in post-secondary education throughout this province, including funding to support francophone students in northern Ontario, eastern Ontario and the south of Ontario.

I am proud of the tremendous investments that we have made in Collège Boréal, partly through the support of my colleague the member from Sudbury, who is a great advocate for the support for Boréal. We continue to support Boréal's operations in the south of Ontario. We continue to work with Collège Boréal and all community colleges and universities throughout this province to make sure that they are providing outstanding education.

I find it passing strange that a member from a party that cut funding to our colleges and universities, that cut funding for student support, would stand up and be critical of the literally billions of dollars that we have invested in post-secondary education in this province, y compris l'éducation pour les francophones.

#### MIDWIFERY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, today

is International Day of the Midwife, and, as you indicated earlier, the Association of Ontario Midwives is currently in attendance here at question period and will be holding a reception later this afternoon, which I hope all members will attend.

Midwifery has long played a role in the prenatal care and birthing of babies around the world. As a matter of fact, my own husband was not only delivered but he was also named by the midwife who assisted his mother. I firmly believe in the skill and the integrity of midwives and I am proud to be part of a government that supports them so strongly.

Minister, could you tell the Legislature about how the Ontario government is supporting the great work of midwives across this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for the question. I know how strongly she feels about this issue.

I would like to welcome the midwives to the Legislature this morning. I also want to thank them for the work they do every day to support families and to promote midwifery in Ontario. I genuinely respect the skills and the values and professionalism that midwives bring to our health care system in Ontario.

More and more parents are choosing the care of midwives. In fact, Ontario's 529 midwives delivered care to 16,000 women and their babies last year. That's over 10% of the births. Just over a month ago I saw first-hand the skill of midwives when my grandson Paxson was born to my daughter Christie and her husband Mark. I was there. I saw the work they do and I am eternally grateful.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Thank you, Minister. I know that our highly qualified midwives are an important health care option available to Ontario families. As a matter of fact, this care is covered by OHIP both in hospitals and at home.

I know that midwifery services are in great demand across Ontario. Parents and grandparents understand and appreciate the value of the personal care provided by midwives. What is this government doing in order to meet the demand for midwifery services across this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to say that we are working toward ensuring that every woman who wants the care of a midwife is actually able to access the care of a midwife. We have come a long way. Since we were elected in 2003, we've more than tripled funding for midwife services, and we're committed to doing more. That's why we've expanded enrolment at three midwifery programs in Ontario. When the first expanded class graduates next year, 65 new midwives will be ready to practise. I met with some of those midwifery students at McMaster University just a few weeks ago. This is great news for Ontario families.

We've also worked with the College of Midwives of Ontario to expand the scope of practice for midwives so they can provide more services.



We are looking forward to the ongoing collaboration with midwives to further improve care in this province.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Your ministry has received 750 complaints about wind turbines in just two years. That's more than one complaint a day. This should come as no surprise. Every member in this House has received complaints about the siting of wind turbines. You claim to have rules regulating the placement of wind turbines, but by your own admission you're doing absolutely nothing about non-compliance. Companies are in the business of making a profit. If your ministry issues no fines and issues no orders to comply, you are giving them your tacit approval to ignore the rules.

Why have you abandoned your responsibility as a government to set the rules and to also make sure that they are followed?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The principal reason we have a Minister of the Environment is to protect human health, particularly for our children, many of whom are visiting us today in the Legislature. They expect to have clean air to breathe. The number one reason our children go to emergency rooms is because of asthma due to poor air quality. On this side of the House, we are committed to cleaning up our air.

1120

I say to the member that when we came into power, we had some 10 wind turbines in the province of Ontario. Today there are well over 800. During the period in question, over two years, we received some 750-odd complaints from 50 families. The vast majority of those complaints came from 20. We take all of those complaints very seriously because it's important for us to make sure that we're protecting human health. That is exactly what we do. That's why, in every case, we review the complaint and we make sure that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Let's compare the records, Minister. Your government brought in heavy-handed legislation that completely stripped municipalities of their voice in the placement of industrial wind farms. For over two years, you have brushed off reasonable requests from the public seeking assurances that development is being done responsibly. By contrast, over a year ago the Ontario PC Party introduced an opposition day motion that called for the study of health and environmental impacts of wind farms, and to restore the planning authority governing them to municipalities and local boards. Your caucus was whipped and voted against it. How does your party justify showing such little respect for the people you claim to represent?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Let's be very clear: When it comes to this issue, the facts are obvious. For over 800 wind turbines, we have received complaints on less than 1 in 20, and the position of the Progressive Conservative

Party is to shut them all down. You ask for a moratorium on wind. What do we get from wind? We get renewable energy. Do we get air pollution? No. Do we get negative effects for our children? Absolutely not. Your position is, because there's 1 in 20—and in every case, we investigate and we take those complaints very seriously. I say to the member, we'll put our record on this side of the House protecting—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew, you just asked a question. I would appreciate it if you would listen to the minister.

Minister.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** All we know is, the party of the moratoria over there doesn't want to have renewable energy, so we can go back to burning dirty coal, which affects everyone in this House and all of our children. On this side of the House, we are for renewable energy. You are for the burning of dirty coal.

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** As already has been mentioned, we are joined at Queen's Park today by members of the Yellow Shirt Brigade. These community members have fought tirelessly to protect and restore health care in Niagara. As emergency rooms, medical beds and operating rooms close in Port Colborne and Fort Erie, as Niagara regional council and eight municipalities have passed resolutions requesting an independent investigation into the Niagara Health System, as over 13,000 signatures have been collected, the yellow shirts have fought endlessly to bring attention to the problems in Niagara. After ignoring Niagara's elected officials, will she do the same to the region's community activists?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to say that I really object to the tenor of that question. We are working very hard to improve health care in the Niagara area. We do understand that there are issues that we need to address, and we are working hard to find those solutions.

Earlier this week, the member opposite raised an issue that was a complete—let me just offer clarification about long-term-care beds, because there was some misinformation in this House on that issue. There was speculation that there were beds being closed. That is completely untrue, and the question was based on unfounded information.

What I think is important to do is that all of us together have a responsibility to the people we serve as well as to our political parties. I would ask the member opposite to think about what she's doing to health care in Niagara.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The pain and suffering caused by problems in Niagara's health care system are staggering. Patricia Anzovino, the grandmother of Reilly Anzovino, is with us here today. Reilly tragically died as her ambulance approached the Welland Hospital because the nearby Fort Erie emergency room was closed. Every



resident in Niagara is left wondering whether the health care services they need are going to be there for them when they're required the most.

Today, will the Minister of Health finally stop denying the situation in Niagara, which she continues to do right up until this very minute, and explain to the yellow shirts and all of their fellow citizens in the Niagara region how her government plans to address the problems that truly do exist in their region?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to begin by offering my condolences to the grandmother who is represented here today. I think all of us can only imagine what you are dealing with. I very much look forward to the coroner's report. I know that the coroner is investigating this tragedy.

What I can tell you is that the focus on improving care in Niagara is strong; it is showing results. The urgent care centres in Fort Erie and Port Colborne are seeing higher volumes and they are seeing shorter wait times. We're seeing dramatically shorter wait times for procedures like hip replacements—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, Ontario families know that a sustainable water source is vital to our well-being and our way of life. Much of the world's fresh water is found right in our own backyard in the Great Lakes. A key plank of the Open Ontario act is to ensure that Ontario become a centre of excellence in developing clean water technology. Ontario has already been identified as a leader in the emerging market of clean water—a key driver of economic prosperity.

Minister, protecting the environment by creating good green jobs is a priority for the McGuinty government, but will Ontario really be able to become a leader in clean water technology?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my friend for the question. For some context on this planet—the water planet: If you took all of the water on this planet and you said it was 100 litres, 97 of those litres would be salt water, which means we can't drink it. Two of those litres are frozen in our polar ice caps. Only one litre of that 100 litres is actually fresh drinking water. Fortunately, here in Ontario, we are the great stewards of one of the greatest reservoirs of fresh water in the world: the Great Lakes system. So we take great responsibility about how we need to steward that water. But in an increasingly thirsty world, what we need to do is export our expertise and our technology, not our water. That's why, in the Water Opportunities Act, we were very clear that we will not export our water, but we will export our technology to help an increasingly thirsty world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The world relies on these Ontario companies to provide the technology to keep them safe. I

know that the good people of Ottawa–Orléans will be pleased to know that Ontario is creating green jobs, exporting our technologies around the world. Ontario's fresh water supply is a limited resource, one that must be cherished and protected for future generations.

Some residents in my riding want to make sure that any economic development does not come at the expense of this valuable resource. Minister, can you tell this House how the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act will actually improve water conservation in Ontario?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** That's exactly why it is called the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. I, for the life of me, cannot really understand why the opposition would vote against that; I don't know if it was the "opportunity" or the "conservation" part or the "water" part. But what I can tell you is that the global market is some \$400 billion a year. It's growing at 15%. There are already 22,000 people in the province of Ontario in that clean water sector; good-paying jobs, the kind of jobs that we want for our children.

I want to assure the member that, working with municipalities, we are helping them understand that if they can conserve water, they can lower the cost for people who use water, and in the same way, also make sure that we're preserving this precious, very valuable resource. I want to say to the member that we believe that water and the legacy of water that we have inherited is something that is so important that we steward. I want to thank him for his advocacy on this matter.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Based on your comments in the media today, you seem to believe that every problem resulting in the siting of industrial turbines will be solved by the companies who own them. That certainly explains why you've been ignoring the Whitworth and Kidd families in my riding since 2006. They have been forced out of their homes at the recommendation of their doctor, who used to be a medical officer of health, because of the constant noise and electrical pollution produced by the substation. Minister, after five years, isn't it time for you to act?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** First of all, I want to thank the member for her question and for the advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

The reason the Ministry of the Environment is open 365 days a year, 24/7, is that people, if they feel that there is some detriment to their health due to an environmental issue, can call us. That's exactly why people call us. I want to say to the member that all the wind turbines that are up in the province are based on the old rules, and all of them are expected and required by law to comply. So when people complain, we take that very seriously and we investigate.

1130

One of the powers that we have at the Ministry of the Environment is the fact that they cannot operate without



our approval. So when we call a company and say that we have a concern, they take action. We expect them to take action. We take the complaints seriously; we investigate them.

I'm more than happy to discuss with the member concerns about her own particular constituents, but—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, they've been calling for five years. The point is, you have done nothing.

The substation is located 390 metres from the Kidd home and 490 metres from the Whitworth home, even though your own regulation states that substations must be, at minimum, 500 metres away from dwellings. You were also told in a meeting with the Amaranth councillors that there was no approval given for this substation, even though your ministry regulations demand it.

Minister, when are you going to stand up for the Kidds and the Whitworths in Dufferin-Caledon?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** The question is, why did the member vote against the Green Energy Act, which was designed to ensure that we have, at the provincial level, the tools we require to ensure that companies are protecting human health? It is exactly why we uploaded responsibility for these issues to the provincial government: because it's our level of government that has the ability to deal with these companies and ensure that they are in full compliance with provincial laws.

As I said to the member, I have reviewed the correspondence between my ministry and your constituents, and I'd be more than happy to have a discussion with you and your constituents about this matter. Again, it is very important to understand that in all of these particular cases, our job is to protect human health, and at the Ministry of the Environment, we take that job very, very seriously. As a result, we will continue to do what is required to protect human health—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### SOLDIERS' REMAINS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. On a few occasions in question period, I've raised the issue of the reburial of War of 1812 British, aboriginal and American soldiers' remains. The minister has sent me notes and has spoken to me to say that he's looking into the request for \$200,000 in funding specific to this project, but from where I sit, I can't see any action being taken.

Will the minister finally commit today, publicly and positively, to the city of Hamilton's request for \$200,000 for this reburial project?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the question. Yes, I did exchange notes, and even talked to the honourable member. Quite recently, I said to him that I'm still waiting for the mayor of Hamilton to respond to my letter.

But having said that, the War of 1812 bicentennial offers Ontario a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich

heritage while promoting tourism and generating economic activity. This is why our government has invested a total of \$27 million to enhance the War of 1812 heritage site. We've also invested over \$1 million to assist seven regional umbrella groups in planning local 1812 activities. This includes \$50,000 to the western corridor bicentennial alliance, which includes the city of Hamilton.

I appreciate the significance of the battle of Stoney Creek and the Smith's Knoll site to the city of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** With all due respect to the minister, he has received a letter from Mayor Eisenberger, from Councillor Clark, from me and from veterans, so that answer is not good enough.

We have a few months remaining until the bicentennial of the beginning of the War of 1812. We have just over two years until the commemoration of the June 5, 1813, Battle of Stoney Creek, Canada's sovereignty battle. Now is the right time. It's the right weather. It's a good time to start an archaeological dig.

Will this minister commit these funds now so that work can get started, or is he waiting to make this announcement in the fall? I hope not, because this is non-political. This is for the respect for the veterans of the War of 1812, and I would hope that this government would step up to the plate and honour our heroes.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question. The War of 1812 is a very significant event in our history. It was said that it even gave Canada its identity.

Let me repeat: I contacted the new mayor of Hamilton to encourage the city to work with the alliance, as its role is to identify local and regional bicentennial projects and priorities.

Our government commends and appreciates the collective efforts across Ontario to plan and develop the 1812 bicentennial activities. Come 2012, there will be celebrations of 1812 across Ontario.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Over the years, I've seen a need for an increase in services for kids struggling with mental health challenges. As a principal and former educator, I've heard from parents—and I've worked with parents—that children have different needs than adults. They need supports that will help them address their problems quickly—identify them early and intervene early—to remain in school and grow to be productive citizens. Research is now showing that increased support for students with mental health issues lowers the dropout rate.

I also have with me the largest territory in Canada, the Six Nations—and I wanted to know whether or not the minister can help us with this and explain the support for children with mental health issues across the board, including the Six Nations territory on the Grand River.



**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member from Brant for his advocacy with respect to children's mental health, his advocacy with respect to the aboriginal communities that he represents in his community, and for bringing this issue to the floor of the Legislature once again.

I, too, have heard from many families, providers and experts about the importance of early identification, early intervention, meeting the special needs that children have in a non-stigmatizing way, meeting those needs in communities. Whether it's the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Children's Mental Health Ontario, our ministry and our government, we all agree that an integrated mental health system must address the needs of children and youth in a specific way. That's why we're committing to investing in a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, starting with children and youth. Some of those children who will be at the very forefront, whom we need to pay special attention to—are the unique challenges faced by aboriginal communities, their children, and making sure that we are able to give those kids right across the province, on- and off-reserve, the services and supports they need to be everything that we aspire for them.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### BUILDING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING YOUTH TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT LA FONDATION DE FAMILLES ET LA RÉUSSITE CHEZ LES JEUNES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On April 19, 2011, Ms. Smith moved second reading of Bill 179. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Barrett, Toby  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Bisson, Gilles  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob

Gélinas, France  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hampton, Howard  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kormos, Peter  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave

Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Prue, Michael  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Savoline, Joyce  
Sergio, Mario  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique

Chudleigh, Ted  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield

Marchese, Rosario  
Matthews, Deborah  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol

Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakubski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**

The ayes are 64; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1146 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I am absolutely delighted to introduce to the Legislature two very important guests: Mr. Mehmet Budak, who is the executive director of the Turkish Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Fatih Yegul, who is the executive director of the Anatolian Heritage Federation. They're here today to follow the proceedings because we're going to be introducing the Anatolian Heritage Day Act today.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** There's only one thing spinning faster than the McGuinty Liberals' wind farms, and that is the rhetoric of the Minister of the Environment. It's really no surprise, given the complaints streaming in about wind farms, some 750 in the last two years alone. But instead of addressing the complaints and ensuring full compliance with the law, the Liberals are content just to brush off citizens with legitimate concerns. In fact, I'm receiving emails from people in Perth-Wellington, the environment minister's own riding. They are justifiably upset that their MPP isn't listening. They're angry that he keeps changing his story—and his story is inconsistent with the facts.

Yesterday, in a staged question, the minister said his ministry received some 45 wind farm applications, 24 of which were rejected for insufficient consultation. There's just one problem: No one believes him anymore. I certainly don't buy it. That's why he needs to release that list of applications and he needs to show proof that

consultation was in fact the main reason why those 24 applications were rejected.

Remember, this minister approved a wind farm in his own riding even though the municipality chose not to submit the consultation forms which were necessary, or so he used to tell his constituents. The minister said that if a wind farm application was incomplete, it would not be approved. He's never denied saying it, and for changing his story and brushing off all who disagree with him, including his own constituents, he should apologize.

#### ACCESSIBLE MEDIA INC.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** On a more positive note, it's a pleasure to rise and say a few words about a company called Accessible Media Inc.

A few weeks ago, I attended a unique fundraising event in Oakville supporting the Foundation Fighting Blindness. A young lady there whose name is Molly Burke and fellow students at White Oaks school organized a dinner in the dark to raise money for vision research. At the event, I spoke with Peter Burke, who is vice-president of a remarkable Ontario organization called Accessible Media Inc. AMI is a multimedia not-for-profit organization whose mission is to make all media accessible to all Canadians. They have two broadcast services and they serve more than five million Canadians who are blind, have low vision, are deaf or hearing impaired, are in need of literacy skills, or are learning English. The two broadcast systems have made AMI a world leader in accessible media.

VoicePrint is the world's largest service making news information accessible to all those who need it. TACTv is the world's first and only network to broadcast all programs with open description and closed captioning. I would encourage all members of the House to take a look at the efforts of AMI by visiting [accessiblemedia.com](http://accessiblemedia.com).

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yesterday I had the opportunity to join my colleague from Nepean—Carleton on the estimates committee, and I have to tell you how disappointed I was that the government has turned this committee into somewhat of a sham. Repeatedly, the Minister of Revenue—and it was the Ministry of Revenue that we had in front of estimates—stated that the Ministry of Revenue collects taxes. I think everybody understands that. We continually were questioning how much HST the ministry collected on hydro bills in the last year, at which point she could not answer the question or would not answer the question.

Does the ministry collect it? "Yes, that's what we do; we collect taxes." Do you count the money, I asked? Apparently they collect taxes but do not count the money. Yet the minister could tell us that police had seized 151 million contraband cigarettes in the province of Ontario. So they're counting cigarettes but not count-

ing the dollars that they're gaining from people on the HST on hydro bills.

We also asked them how much more HST they're going to collect off hydro bills now that they've raised the price of hydro repeatedly since last year when the HST came in. Again, no willingness to answer the question. Disappointed in the estimates committee; disappointed in the minister.

#### MIDWIFERY

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to take this opportunity this afternoon to speak on the International Day of the Midwife. I'd also like to thank the Association of Ontario Midwives for the work they do every day to support and promote midwifery in Ontario.

Today we're here to celebrate the International Day of the Midwife at Queen's Park, and Queen's Park certainly is a fitting venue to mark this important day, because the government of Ontario holds such high value in the skills and professionalism that midwives bring to our health care system.

Since 1994, through the College of Midwives of Ontario, we've seen hundreds of midwives registered to practise in our province. It's a profession that is steadily growing in popularity among expectant parents. Just last year, the 529 midwives who are currently practising delivered exceptional care to 16,000 women, representing over 10% of the births in Ontario.

But even still, we're not able to provide the services to every woman who requests midwifery services, and that's something that we're going to change. Our government wants to ensure that every woman wanting a midwife has access to one, and that's why we committed to increasing the number of midwives by expanding enrolment at three midwifery education programs in Ontario, and when the first expanded class graduates next year, 65 new midwives will be ready to practise. This is great news for Ontario families, and I can assure you that our government is looking forward to our continued collaboration with the college and the association as we move this vital profession forward.

#### MATTHEWS HOUSE HOSPICE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to congratulate the volunteers at Matthews House Hospice for their successful Hike for Hospice on Sunday in Alliston. Families, seniors and businesses in south Simcoe provided tremendous support by donating more than \$21,000 to Matthews House in support of their good work.

But while Matthews House receives wonderful support from the community, government support is not as generous or even fair. There's a huge discrepancy between how hospices are funded in central Ontario. Matthews House receives 15.6% of their budget from the province while hospices in York region receive 35% to 40% and some as much as 75%. So my question to the Premier and the Minister of Health is, why is there such a



divergence of support from the province for the people of New Tecumseth?

The situation at Matthews House is increasingly urgent. They have lost one-time funding from both the Central LHIN and support from a three-year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, which will result in a loss of employees and cuts in services. To make matters worse, the government can't even get their act together to solve this. The Central LHIN told Matthews House that they had to lobby the Minister of Health, and then the minister told them that they had to lobby the LHIN. In fact, they've been working with Amanda McGoey from the minister's office for months and months, but those conversations have been completely futile.

We need a solution to this problem. The time for talk is over; it's time for the minister to appoint someone with authority to sit down with us and hammer out a solution. There is absolutely no excuse for the ministry to deny requests for meetings with local health care providers.

#### DON VALLEY ART CLUB

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to talk about the Don Valley Art Club. It's the premier art club, I think, in the whole of the east end of Toronto. This weekend, they're going to start their annual juried show and sale, and as I said, they are made up of the finest local artists. They have talent that is unique to our city and to our province.

The idea of an artist colony in East York was first floated by True Davidson in East York, and the Don Valley Art Club came to paint some of the local scenes, including the wilderness area of the Don Valley and some of the street scenes in East York and in Toronto.

Today they are located at the Brick Works, which is run by Evergreen, off Bayview Avenue, and they do most of the painting there. The show will take place, commencing Saturday, May 7, at approximately noon and will run for the following two weekends. It's taking place at the paper mill at Todmorden, at Pottery Road between Broadview Avenue and Bayview Avenue. Everyone is welcome, and I would welcome people to come out to see and experience the unique talent of the people of Toronto, to buy some art, to recognize the greatness of the Don Valley Art Club and to actually take a little piece of the history of our community home with them.

I think the artists will be very happy to see everyone attend, and I thank everyone in advance for coming on out.

1310

#### TORONTO EAST GENERAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my support for the redevelopment of Toronto East General Hospital. This hospital, which is located in Beaches-East York, is a major service provider for many residents of Scarborough Southwest. The hospital has an impressive track record as a provider of high-quality patient care while operating in a fiscally accountable manner.

Toronto East General has been implementing our government's health transformation agenda and, in doing so, is becoming a provincial leader in providing quality patient care. Indeed, on many occasions, our government has recognized the contributions of Mr. Rob Devitt, the hospital's chief executive officer, who, along with his senior staff, helped to build strong partnerships with other hospitals so that they can provide the best possible health care for all Ontarians.

Toronto East General first opened its doors over 80 years ago. The hospital has one of the lowest wait times for surgery in Toronto. It also has achieved a balanced budget for the 10th consecutive year.

Many residents in the riding of Scarborough Southwest and elsewhere count on Toronto East General as their community hospital. I believe it is important for us to ensure that my constituents and other constituents have access to the kinds of modern facilities that people enjoy elsewhere in the greater Toronto area. I urge our government to support the needed redevelopment of Toronto East General and that their proposal be prioritized.

#### HASAN SAVEHILAGHI

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the work being done by an innovative business operator in my community of London.

Hasan Savehilaghi is the founder and president of Yellow London Taxi. He came to Canada in 1991. An elementary school teacher by profession, he worked hard to update his education and his qualifications, but sadly, he couldn't find a job as a teacher. He was certified as an interpreter in the Ontario court system and he went on to drive a taxi in London.

But he wasn't happy with the unfair rules and regulations imposed on drivers, so he established the London Taxi Association to advocate for drivers. He devoted thousands of volunteer hours to his association, but he still wasn't satisfied. Cab drivers, most of whom were extremely bright and well-educated, were responsible for most of the operating costs of driving a taxi, so they would be better off running the business themselves.

Mr. Savehilaghi established Yellow London Taxi, set up as a co-operative. It's not a traditional cab company; it's owned by 50 shareholders, all of whom are drivers and owners of the taxis that they drive, and the board of directors is democratically elected by the shareholders.

Yellow London Taxi began operations in October 2009 with 12 cars. They now have 67 cars, and there are nearly 100 at the present time.

I want to congratulate Mr. Hasan Savehilaghi for his innovative idea and for putting all of the taxi drivers together to own the company and work together to have a good business for themselves and their families.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** May 3 is of special significance to citizens of Polish ancestry who are today and to-

morrow, and indeed on the weekend, celebrating the 220th anniversary of the Polish constitution.

This constitution of Poland, already 220 years ago, guaranteed for the first time a great deal of personal freedom. It guaranteed freedom of speech; it guaranteed freedom of conscience; and what is really significant is that it guaranteed that there is a separation between the parliament, the executive and an independent judiciary.

Today, therefore, I am very delighted to say a few words about this constitution and invite all members to the flag-raising ceremony that will take place on Sunday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

First, we have an invitation directly from the president of the national Canadian-Polish Congress, Mrs. Berezowski; and also from the acting president of the Canadian Polish Congress, Toronto branch, Mr. Juliusz Kirejczyk. The commemoration mass will take place at St. Stanislaus Church, 12 Denison Street, on May 8 at 11 a.m. Then they will gather at the Polish Combatants Association at 206 Beverly Street and march from there to the Legislature at 2 o'clock.

On behalf of all of us, I wish the Polish Canadian Congress and all those who are celebrating the 220th anniversary of the Polish constitution the very best.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / *Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1316 to 1321.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret

Dhillon, Vic  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kular, Kuldip

Phillips, Gerry  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz

Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Craiton, Kim  
Delaney, Bob

Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Moridi, Reza  
Pendergast, Leeanna

Sousa, Charles  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Gélinas, France  
Hardeman, Ernie

Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Wilson, Jim  
Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 28; the nays are 14.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 3, 2011, the bill is ordered for third reading.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / *Projet de loi 173, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1324 to 1329.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Craiton, Kim  
Delaney, Bob

Dhillon, Vic  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Moridi, Reza

Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sousa, Charles  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?



## Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Gélinas, France  
Hardeman, Emie

Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 29; the nays are 15.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 13, 2011, the bill is ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ANATOLIAN HERITAGE DAY  
ACT, 2011LOI DE 2011 SUR LE JOUR  
DU PATRIMOINE ANATOLIEN

Mr. Ruprecht moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 192, An Act to proclaim Anatolian Heritage Day /  
Projet de loi 192, Loi proclamant le Jour du patrimoine anatolien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I'm delighted to have some guests in the gallery to see this bill going through. The ancient region of Anatolia, which was also known as Asia Minor, was the cradle of some of the greatest civilizations in world history.

The Turkish-Canadian community and the Anatolian Heritage Federation continue to promote and enhance international awareness of this great achievement of the Anatolian civilization and, therefore, that March 15 in each year be proclaimed as Anatolian Heritage Day.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSESPOVERTY  
PAUVRETÉ

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize an important anniversary. Tomorrow, May 6, will mark two years since Ontario's historic Poverty Reduction Act was passed in this Legislature. The act enshrined in law that poverty reduction is a priority for

our government and will be for all future Ontario governments.

Je suis heureuse de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour commémorer un anniversaire important. Demain, le 6 mai, nous fêterons le deuxième anniversaire de l'adoption dans cette Assemblée législative de la Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté, une loi historique en Ontario. Cette loi inscrivait dans le cadre législatif que la réduction de la pauvreté est une priorité de notre gouvernement et qu'elle le sera pour tous les futurs gouvernements de l'Ontario.

With unanimous support from all parties, members of this House stood up for our most vulnerable citizens and recognized that reducing poverty is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

Ontario's poverty reduction strategy focuses on kids first. We cannot afford to ignore the potential of children growing up in poverty. That is why we remain committed to our ambitious goal of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years. It is why we continue to make strategic investments in our children and our economy.

Over the last two years, our government has done more than any other government to help Ontarians living in poverty. Advocates like Jacquie Maund have recognized the effects of our investments. As she said, "The recession's impact on poverty rates would be greater, were it not for the steps taken to date by the Ontario government...."

The Ontario child benefit, created by our government, provides up to \$1,100 per child per year, and we remain committed to increasing the OCB to a maximum of \$1,310 per child annually. It is helping over one million children, and it is a primary reason why a single parent earning minimum wage, with a young child, will take home 58% more than in 2003, and that is over \$10,000 more per year. This, along with new tax credits and increases to the minimum wage, means parents are in a better position to leave social assistance and go to work—a goal we all share.

We're investing in full-day kindergarten for 120,000 children in 1,700 schools by 2012, with full implementation by 2014, benefiting about 250,000 children. Giving our kids the best start in life and the best education is the most important action we can take to break the cycle of poverty.

We're also investing in child and youth mental health, summer jobs for youth at risk, student nutrition and post-secondary education. We have released an affordable housing strategy, raised the minimum wage, provided dental care to low-income kids and started a comprehensive review of Ontario's social assistance system.

Les initiatives et les investissements mis en oeuvre par notre gouvernement ont créé un véritable changement pour les familles ontariennes. Mais nous savons que le gouvernement ne peut s'attaquer seul au problème de la pauvreté. La lutte contre la pauvreté nécessitera que tous les paliers du gouvernement, les citoyens, les organismes sans but lucratif et les partenaires communautaires continuent à travailler ensemble.

Our government's initiatives and investments have created real change for Ontario families, but we know that poverty is an issue government alone cannot tackle. The fight against poverty will continue to require ongoing collaborative efforts from all levels of government, citizens, the not-for-profit sector and community partners.

When we passed the Poverty Reduction Act, we committed ourselves to making a concrete difference in the lives of Ontario children. I trust that the members of this House will stand with us once again in this effort. Together with our partners, we can and we will break the cycle of poverty.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Responses?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the minister on the second anniversary of the poverty reduction strategy.

I think—I hope—we can agree that the best way to reduce poverty in our province is by getting people back to work: jobs, that help lift people out of poverty. Helping people help themselves is behind a new special program in my community. Social services organizations and volunteers have come together to create the Gateway Community Centre for Dufferin county. Organized and staffed by volunteers, individuals who visit Gateway, which is located at St. Mark's church in Orangeville, will have an opportunity to improve and to learn new skills. The focus will be on life skills and skills to help them find employment.

In a very short period of time, a group of dedicated people are creating something positive in my community. Contrast that with a provincial government that is bogged down in regulation and red tape. Do you realize there are over 800 rules surrounding social assistance? Eight hundred. How can we reasonably expect Ontarians to get out of poverty when there are so many rules holding them back?

I find it rich for this minister to rise and talk about all of the great things her government has done to reduce poverty, when so many families are being left behind because of her inaction. I hear from families almost daily who have children with disabilities, who can't get the supports and services they need to ensure they're taken care of and can lead healthy and productive lives in our community. Families are driving themselves into poverty by paying out of pocket for supports and services that this government is not providing, or one parent is having to quit their job to take care of their child with a disability, leaving the family with a single income.

1340

When it comes to autism, the minister knows there are more children on wait-lists for provincially funded IBI therapy than there are children who are receiving it. While children sit on wait-lists for funding, some families are paying \$60,000 per year out of their own pockets for IBI. Families are selling their homes, cashing in their savings and mortgaging their futures to ensure that their children have access to treatment. That is Liberal-imposed poverty.

A poverty reduction strategy sounds like a great thing, but action is needed, not more words. We need a real strategy to create jobs and more opportunities for Ontario families. This is exactly what myself and the PC Conservative caucuses have been advocating for. My colleague and member for Haldimand-Norfolk has done a job with his private member's bill to allow individuals on ODSP to keep more of the money they earn. Under our current system, individuals are penalized for working. Further, recipients feel they're being condemned to a life of poverty as they continually see increased costs for electricity, gasoline and everyday items. Bill 23 passed second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance a year ago. This is a bill that was supported by all parties in the Legislature, yet you do not call it for public hearings.

My colleague the MPP from Sarnia-Lambton also introduced a private member's bill which would increase donations to food banks by providing a significant tax credit to farmers who donate their unsold produce. This is another private member's bill that passed second reading in this Legislature, yet again, this government has yet to call it to committee for public input.

I have to wonder if you are truly serious about reducing poverty in Ontario. It is steps and initiatives like these where we will see a real change in reducing poverty here in Ontario. If the government would pass these two private members' bills, that would be worth celebrating and see some real action to tackle poverty in Ontario.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'm often reminded, when I hear this minister speak, of the famous quotation by Nietzsche, who said, "What is the hardest thing for a person to see? That which is before their very eyes." This minister cannot see what is before her very eyes. Welfare and ODSP rates are all but frozen, keeping people in destitution and poverty by this government. The government continues the clawback policies that take money that is given by the federal government to help the poorest Ontarians and claws that money back from them, keeping them forever in poverty. This government has seen food bank usage go up every single year and literally almost every single month since they announced their 25 in 5 strategy. This government sees more seniors, more disabled, more First Nations, more new immigrants living in poverty now than were living three years ago when they announced their much-vaunted plan.

The minister likes to quote one person, and I think it is out of context. Given that, I'd like to give her some quotes of what other poverty people are saying about this much-vaunted plan. The 25 in 5 Network says, "The 2011 Ontario budget is disappointing for low-income people. There is little new here that will help people struggling in poverty."

They also went on to say, "Social assistance advocates were looking for a meaningful increase in social assistance rates and an easing of some of the rules that trap people in poverty. A 1% one-time increase to social assistance rates is scant help for people on social assistance when the items they need most—food, transportation, hydro—are rising at rates higher than inflation."



And to quote them again, "Nothing in the Ontario budget will help to address this growing hunger problem, and we fear these numbers will continue to rise."

Or, as the Income Security Advocacy Centre so brilliantly stated, "Given skyrocketing food prices and continuing increases in energy and transportation costs, the budget's 1% increase to OW and ODSP rates is more than disappointing and does not respond to deep poverty and desperation, particularly among single people on OW whose incomes are the lowest."

They went on to say that "government has made no moves to change the punitive rules in OW and ODSP that effectively cap people's incomes far below the poverty line and prevent them from improving their incomes on their own."

"Despite asking for advice on which rule changes to make—such as increasing asset limits, reducing earned income and child support deductions, and improving access to better education and skills training supports—the Ontario government has done nothing in this budget to loosen these restrictions on opportunity for people on OW and ODSP."

"Without improving incomes and opportunities for people on OW and ODSP, the government will miss its target of a 25% reduction in child poverty by 2013—and Ontario's increasingly costly social deficit will simply continue to grow."

Or maybe you want to hear from the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, which said, "The 2011 Ontario budget, released on March 29, did not include any new targeted investments in affordable housing; offering little hope to the" now "152,000 households on social housing wait-lists across Ontario—a number that is up by 8% since 2010." And that coincides with the government's great plan.

Or perhaps you want to listen to Barb Millsap, president of the Ontario Council of Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, who said:

"We're very disappointed.... We expected that the first provincial budget following the release of Ontario's affordable housing strategy would bridge the gap in that plan by providing the funding needed to deliver a new supply of affordable housing. Instead, there is nothing at all for housing...."

"Ontario's housing waiting lists have swollen to over 141,000 households.... One in five Ontario renter households are still spending more than half their income on housing. Today, Queen's Park missed a chance to help address Ontario's housing gap by making an investment in affordable housing a cornerstone of Ontario's economic recovery plan."

Or how about Michael Shapcott, who said, "On the operating side, the annual budget of the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is slated to drop by 10% in the coming year to a total of \$602 million; and capital investments will be cut from \$660.7 million to \$95.1 million."

What a great plan this minister has, what a wonderful plan.

## PETITIONS

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from UFCW Local 1977, from Cambridge, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Amira to bring it to the Clerk.

### HOME CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This petition has been presented to me by Mr. William Diaz.

"To the Parliament of Ontario and the minister responsible for seniors:

"Whereas seniors who are disabled and/or ill are presently suffering at home; and

"Whereas the cost of a caregiver on a monthly basis who looks after a senior in their own home is around \$1,200, including room and board; and

"Whereas the cost of taking care of someone at home is at least 10 times less than the cost of a hospital bed; and

"Whereas most seniors with disabilities and/or illness are crowding an already overburdened health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly request that a basic government subsidy be established (based on a doctor's evaluation) which will pay at least a minimum allowance for a caregiver.

"Seniors deserve to live at home as long and as independently as possible."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign my name to it.

### ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, submitted from individuals from across the province. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

1350

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park ... on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition because I fully support it, and I'll give it to page Lukian to deliver it to the table.

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas protecting Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas failure to safeguard one of our last remaining authentic cultural heritage resources, Ontario's inactive cemeteries, would be disastrous for the continuity of the historical record and our collective culture in this province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government must pass Bill 126, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2010, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table with Jonathan.

#### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got a petition from hundreds of people from across Ontario, and it reads:

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted,

independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I am signing this petition because I agree with it.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition to the House. The petition reads as follows:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their ... grandparents, as requested in Bill 22, put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their ... grandparents."

I'm extremely proud to sign my name in support of this bill.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition regarding the Milton District Hospital.

"The Time is Now!

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada; and

"Whereas, during the past six years, 60,000 new people have moved to Milton and another 43,000 will be arriving in the next five years; and

"Whereas, over the next two decades, Milton will become the largest community in Halton region and the second-largest in the Mississauga Halton LHIN; and

"Whereas this rapidly expanding community is still served by a hospital that is undersized and outdated in terms of its physical facility and aging infrastructure that was designed and built to serve 30,000 people; and

"Whereas no other hospital in the region, including the new Oakville hospital, has planned to provide core hospital services to Milton and its growing population; and

"Whereas the Milton District Hospital has not received approval for any added service capacity in the past 25 years; and

"Whereas Halton Healthcare Services has developed a responsive plan to address expansion of Milton District Hospital which it shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Milton District Hospital expansion project be identified as an urgent and top priority of the province of Ontario's multi-year infrastructure plan and that Milton District Hospital be authorized to move to the functional programming stage of the capital approval process."

I'm pleased to sign this petition as I totally agree with it, and pass it to my page Jonathan, who will carry it to the table.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I have a petition here from residents of Guelph, Wellington county and Dufferin county.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

"Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply-managed commodities; and

"Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We applaud the Ontario government's support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector."

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in January 2009, Health Canada approved the medication Soliris on a priority basis for patients with paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH); and

"Whereas PNH is an ultra-rare, progressive and life-threatening blood disorder for which there were no therapeutic options until Soliris; and

"Whereas Soliris is the first and only proven effective treatment for PNH, significantly benefiting patients around the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately provide Soliris as a life-saving treatment option to patients with PNH in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with this petition and also affix my signature to it and give it to page Benjamin.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This petition has to do with identity theft. It's to the Parliament of Ontario and specifically to the Minister of Government Services. It reads as follows:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8 ... be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

#### 1400

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and loan account numbers.

"(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

"(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

"(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate."

Since I agree, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to sign this petition and provide it to you.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to read the petition given to me by Hilary Handley from Toronto.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in January 2009, Health Canada approved the medication Soliris on a priority basis for patients with paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH); and

"Whereas PNH is an ultra-rare, progressive and life-threatening blood disorder for which there were no therapeutic options until Soliris; and

"Whereas Soliris is the first and only proven effective treatment for PNH, significantly benefiting patients around the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately provide Soliris as a life-saving treatment option to patients with PNH in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Melanie.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just to correct the record, on April 13, 2011, during first reading of Bill 179, I prefaced my remarks with the following statement: "At the outset, I should inform the minister that this morning I was given a seventh critic portfolio, and it's this one." It should have read, "I was given a seventh critic portfolio for the carriage of this bill," because the critic for this area is and remains Andrea Horwath, but it is for the carriage of this bill that I am acting as critic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. That is a point of order, a correction of the record.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### GREAT LAKES SHORELINE RIGHT OF PASSAGE ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 SUR LE DROIT DE PASSAGE SUR LE LITTORAL DES GRANDS LACS

Mr. Craitor moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes / Projet de loi 32, Loi créant un droit de passage le long du littoral des Grands Lacs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm extremely proud to have the opportunity to bring forward Bill 32, right of passage, and to have the right to be able to speak on it today.

Summer is coming. It will get warmer and warmer, and when it gets hot, thousands of Ontario families will head down to the absolutely marvellous sand beaches along the shores of our Great Lakes, beaches that are really wonderful most of the time. From Cape Cod to the Cape of Good Hope, from the Gulf Shores to Erie's southern shores, from South Beach to Daytona Beach, from Myrtle Beach to Malibu, all throughout the world people flock to their great beaches. It matters not if the land fronts on these beaches are there with five-star hotels or homes of the rich and famous; the public has a right of passage to access and enjoy their natural wonder.

Likewise, Ontario is blessed. It has great stretches of fabulous sand beaches, especially along our Great Lakes, whether it be from Crystal Beach to Wasaga Beach, from the shores of Ipperwash to the dunes of Sand Banks, or from Port Dover to Port Stanley. But the right of passage on Ontario beaches is truly ill-defined, or perhaps I'd better say that it's not even defined.

So the people of Tiny township have a big problem. So do the people of Fort Erie. Likewise, so do the citizens of Cobourg. More and more are finding out that nature's wonderful legacy is being fenced off by adjacent landowners.

The result is that the children of Ontario's summer—our children—are being denied a right of passage, both literally and figuratively. That's why I urge this Parliament to take a close look at Bill 32 and help properly define the right of passage along the Ontario Great Lakes so that people and children can enjoy walking and swimming along our great beaches.

I want to mention some people who have taken the time to come here to Queen's Park to support this bill. Joining me today are some super folks from right across Ontario. I want to first introduce Betty Van Osch, who is the president of Shorewalk. Thank you, Betty, for coming out. I want to mention Councillor Stephen Passero—I don't think he was able to get here—who is past president of Shorewalk and councillor for the town of Fort Erie. Garry Skerrett, the founder of Shorewalk, is here from Fort Erie. Garry, it's a pleasure to have you here. Serena Smith from Fort Erie and Paul Kassay from Crystal Beach—I had the pleasure of attending your birthday; I won't say for what year. It was a great birthday party. Amy King from Ridgeway and Bob Cairns, president of the Cobourg Beach Society: Thank you for coming out.

One name I want to mention is a former member of this House, who sadly passed away just a couple weeks ago; I was at his funeral. That was MPP Ray Haggerty, who sat on Shorewalk's advisory board. In fact, Ray Haggerty made the trip up here when we introduced this bill. He was one of those who passionately believed in the right of passage.



I was also happy to hear from some other people. Matthew Pearson of Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation wasn't able to make it but sent best wishes; and Don, Kathy and Nicole, who I think may be here from Tiny township. It's nice to have you come up as well. Thank you.

The reason all these fine people are here is because each of their communities—some; certainly not all—is asserting a right that does not exist and is not supported in British common law. The people who are exerting this right, which they say they have, are doing it in the crudest way you can imagine. They are barricading Ontario's public beaches with chain link fences that stretch out into navigable international waters and placing inappropriate "No Trespassing" signs in front of those fences. In essence, they're simply putting fences right into Lake Ontario and saying, "We own it. We own the land all the way into the lake. It belongs to us, and you cannot walk along the shores of the Great Lakes."

Because of the ambiguity and the absence of a defining law, nothing is being done by any authority to exert the public's right of passage to walk along our wonderful beachfronts.

What does this proposed legislation do? I'm going to tell you what it doesn't do, first of all. What it doesn't do is expropriate or take away any legal right property owners may have; it does not permit the passage of anybody across private lands to access the shoreline beach; and it does not allow for the improper use of shoreline beaches. In fact, this legislation gives adjacent landowners and the beach itself protection from the use of motorized vehicles. It also allows the government to prescribe regulations to govern conduct on the beach. For example, it could be possible to regulate access to daylight hours, a right not currently in place.

I want to say that I'm truly indebted to the members of Fort Erie Shorewalk, Save the Beaches of Tiny township and the Cobourg Beach Society.

I want to mention one of my colleagues, the member from Welland, Peter Kormos—I'm not supposed to mention his name, but I just did. The member from Welland, way back when—I have the photograph of him; his hair was a lot darker back then—was involved in a demonstration to save our beaches. So this has been going on for a while.

1410

As Matthew Pearson from the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation says, "Securing the right of access along our Great Lakes beaches will become more and more important as temperatures tend to rise and demand for beach use increases. The exclusion of motorized vehicles on beaches is extremely important for protecting beach habitat and reducing the spread of invasive plants along our coastal lines."

Let me tell you why we're in this situation. As the pressures of the population grow and collide with the interests of private ownership, the issues of public access to the beaches of the Great Lakes in Ontario has become an increasingly controversial issue.

In fact, to put it in its simplest terms, can you imagine that a homeowner would put up a fence and the fence would go all the way out to the front of his yard and on to the sidewalk, and he would say, "You cannot walk along the sidewalks in front of my house because, in my opinion, I have a right to put a fence all the way there and it belongs to me"?

What we have are individuals who've gone the reverse way, put up fences in the back of their yards and put them right into the lake and have now blocked off access for the public to be able to access it.

I wanted to take a moment to read an article that I think clearly defines what we're trying to accomplish in this House today. It says:

"Jutting out from a fortified steel retaining wall at the end of Pleasant Beach Road at the border of Fort Erie and Port Colborne, a high fence made of steel beams and chain link continues on right to the water's edge.

"A bluntly worded sign posted by the property owner on the fence warns the beach is private, and trespassing beyond that point is prohibited.

"Braving a bone-chilling wind on Monday ... MPP Kim Craitor and ... resident Garry Skerrett stood next to the fence, dwarfed by the barrier but determined to see the day when it—and hundreds of other such barriers barring public access to beaches along the Great Lakes—are taken down.

"Craitor, whose riding includes Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, introduced a private member's bill in the Ontario Legislature" to give people the right to walk along the Great Lakes shoreline.

"Skerrett, president of the Ontario Shorewalk Association, which has been fighting for public access to the beaches for about two years, said the time has come for the fences to come down. He was part of two busloads of people" at that time, "including Niagara high school students, who accompanied Craitor to Queen's Park to support his bill....

"Craitor said when Skerrett's group first approached him asking for help in ridding the Great Lakes of the fences put up by property owners, he was surprised to hear of the barriers that routinely bar the public from visiting places such as the Point Abino lighthouse, a national historic site." Can you imagine a fence being put up that would not allow people to walk along the Great Lakes shoreline to a national heritage site?

In absence of specific statutory rules or regulations, the bill would help define, through this legislation, that people have the right to walk the shorelines of Ontario. I know that a number of my colleagues on both sides of the House will be speaking to the bill and I'm looking forward to their input about the bill. I know that one of my colleagues will be speaking on it. I'll be pleased to do a wrap-up in the time that I have as well to give some more input as to why this bill is so significant to the rights of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss Bill 32 in regard to this. First of



all, I completely agree with the member in regard to the fencing and that aspect and the impacts that go on about this legislation, but I spoke to a number of property owners in Oshawa who are on Lake Ontario and they had some specific concerns with it. The regulation component of the legislation that comes forward is somewhat concerning. The member mentioned the fact that there potentially could be closing hours that would be available for operation etc. A lot of individuals, particularly once upon a time—not so much in our community, because the smelt population has decreased substantially, but in my younger days, as the member from Beaches–East York would know, smelt fishing was very popular along the shores of Lake Ontario, where the smelt population is substantially decreased now. Yet in other areas throughout a number of the Great Lakes, it's still very popular. So looking at regulations, regulating hours; what's the impact going to be on those individuals who are actively out smelt fishing at that particular time?

Some of the other concerns are very specifically in regards to the definition of "high-water mark." In the legislation, in the explanatory note, it specifically states, "The bill reserves a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes between the shoreline and high-water mark." Then it goes on to give a definition of the "high-water mark." In the act, it means "the mark on the shore where the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation or other easily recognized characteristic."

Part of the problem with that is that a lot of the conservation authorities are interpreting the high-water mark in different ways. There are three high-water marks. There's the spring high-water mark, which usually takes place in the Great Lakes at about June; then there's the annual high-water mark; and then there's the one that causes the problems that give everyone concern: the 100-year water mark.

For those who don't understand, once every 100 years, a hurricane passes through Ontario and substantially impacts the high-water marks in Ontario. A lot of the conservation authorities are utilizing the 100-year high-water mark on these properties now and disallowing individuals the ability to use those properties.

The ones whom I spoke with along Lake Ontario there—Mr. Crozier etc.—their concern was, "What's this going to mean now? The conservation authority is already disallowing us to use that 100-year high-water mark property in any way, shape or form." The concern comes forward as, "What's going to take place in regards to that aspect?" When you look at the definition of the fact, that it would take into regulation how it's going to be affected, I think it needs to be clearly defined as to how it's going to unfold.

Some of the other areas—the specifics regarding the other individuals I spoke with: "Does this mean that somebody can come along, use the high-water mark as their area, and then sit down because they've walked into an area where they can have a beach bonfire? What's

going to be the impact there, and how is that going to be regulated and monitored etc. so that those individuals who use that for those purposes"—what is going to take place in Wasaga Beach, for example, as specifically mentioned to me in that particular area? Is somebody going to come along and now say that they can use that?

One of the other areas that I'm sure the member hasn't taken into consideration—because there have been discussions about this. I have to mention that access issues in the province of Ontario are very prevalent everywhere. It's not just along the Great Lakes; it's in other areas as well. Many may not know that 66 feet of shoreline in the inner lakes is predominantly owned by the municipalities until sold off. Those municipalities use that as revenue generation for the retail sale, plus the taxation, to allow them to have that. What would be the impacts on those in future expectations on those inland lakes by municipalities, should this go through?

We all set a precedent. I realize it's somewhat out there, but realistically, we know how politics works. "What happened there? Why can't we take it somewhere else?"

One of the other things: Places like Frenchman's Bay were brought forward as well. I'm not sure if individuals are familiar with how Frenchman's Bay came to be. The individual bought the land, then he opened up the shoreline to allow it to be flooded, and now we have a huge bay there, where everybody owns the land on the inside.

The same thing has taken place with, I believe, St Marys Cement. What they did there was they used a crown that allowed them access to establish a port inside the shoreline. Now we've got a port on St Marys Cement that's effectively going to be subject to legislation, where it's owned by the crown, yet they have ports and ships going in and out in this area on a regular basis. It's not private, but there are going to be impacts there. You have to bring some security to these individuals so they gain an understanding of how it's going to unfold or not unfold.

Another area is the First Nations response. You mentioned, I believe, at least one First Nation community. I'm not sure how they responded to this, in allowing that to take place. I know there's a number of them down Cornwall way—I think you mentioned the community. I'm not sure if it was Cornwall or the Belleville community. How is that going to impact First Nation communities that are right along the shorelines in a number of these areas in Ontario?

1420

As we move forward with these things, we need to work out the details to make sure that we get it right, so that it goes forward with the intent. I completely agree: Anybody who's fencing right down to the lake should not be allowed to do it in any way, shape or form, for numerous reasons. But then again, when I'm thinking about it, and when I thought about the debate, I realized that, for example, Balsam Lake Provincial Park has a drift problem with sand. The currents move along and move the sand along, so they use aspects like that to stop the



drift of sand from washing all the way along the shore. They use those effectively to ensure that the sand remains along those beaches that are there by putting those up. So if you want to disallow fencing, make sure it's not implementing or impacting those areas that are trying to put those up to protect the shoreline in the first place. Balsam Lake Provincial Park, although it's not on the Great Lakes, was the one that came to mind because I directly dealt with it and went up to and visibly saw the issue taking place there.

I didn't have time, upon finding out that I was to debate on this today, to find out whether it was going to impact any of the provincial parks and whether they specifically do it, whether it's Darlington or a large number of other ones along there.

Some of the other aspects that I hope the member will be able to address are places along Turkey Point and that. These individuals own large sections of land right down to the marsh there. How is that going to impact the Turkey Point club or the—there are a number of clubs, some of the other ones that the member from Haldimand-Norfolk has mentioned to me in the past as well. How are those private clubs going to be impacted for the utilization of that? And is it allowing public access in those particular areas where there are duck hunting clubs along those properties in that area?

You want to make sure that if access is being granted, they realize that these particular locations—and the same goes for Darlington Provincial Park. They open duck hunting in the fall on specific days, with specific regulations, only in the morning. Are individuals going to be allowed access to those specific areas while the duck hunt is taking place? These are all the small things that need to be taken into consideration when you bring legislation forward.

You mentioned bringing a couple of busloads of students down. Quite frankly, when I was in high school, that was a great place to be. We went out to many places where there weren't any houses around and we enjoyed the spring smelt fishing and all the things that went along with it. Now, if it's opened up right along with subdivisions abutting right up against that, what's the impact going to be? And are we not creating more problems for those individuals, as opposed to helping them out?

These are just some of the key aspects that I wanted to be sure that I got on the record, because as we move forward with legislation we want to make sure we address all the problems before they become problems because we didn't realize that, we didn't know that, and is that going to be effective?

We understand walking along the shoreline, but does that mean you're allowed to on a continuous path? Or does it mean you're allowed to walk to a specific site and establish a campsite, bring things along with you etc.? Or does it mean you're just allowed a hiking path? The right of passage is mentioned.

Those are some of the key things that I wanted to bring up at this time. Hopefully, the member will be able to address some of those, or the other individuals speaking on behalf of this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** At the outset, I want to assure the member that I will be supporting this bill. I think it's absolutely essential that it goes forward to second reading and much public debate and input.

I support this bill because I remember several years ago watching on the television almost every night the antics of Tiny township, watching people putting up fences and watching people tear them down, watching neighbours going at each other's throats, watching all kinds of community angst, having neighbour against neighbour, having people upset. It seems to me that we have to resolve this issue. If we need to resolve the issue, we need to resolve it in a way that will affect and support the majority of Ontarians. By the majority, I mean those who will be able to make and utilize our magnificent waterfronts along the Great Lakes.

If I had anything that I was worried about, it's perhaps that we should be looking at other lakes as well, because not all of the properties or the built-up areas are along the Great Lakes. I also note that Lake St. Clair is not one of the Great Lakes but has considerable properties along it and many beaches, and I'm sure that many Ontarians would make use of that as well as some of the larger lakes in Ontario: Lake Simcoe, Lake Nipissing, Lake Nipigon and others. Perhaps when this comes to committee, we can talk about expanding it to other locations.

I too have some difficulty about the whole concept of the high-water mark, because I note that on the Great Lakes, from year to year, you will see television reports and others about the lake levels being up or down. In some years, you will see lake levels being down so far that the docks where people normally pull their boats up are on dry land. In other years, you will see the lakes up at so high a level that the docks which people normally pull their boats up to are submerged. Those lake levels will change from year to year, depending on the amount of snowfall, depending on the amount of drought and how much water is released through the system, in some cases.

We need to have a definition, as my friend from Oshawa said earlier, that pinpoints where that high-water mark is. I would suggest that the high-water mark should be, at a minimum, the highest point at which it existed in the previous 10 years, if not where storms or hurricanes of the century have driven it further up. Property owners need to know, should this law be passed, exactly where that line is going to be, because it makes very little sense to me to see a couple of years of drought in a row and have it go further and further out and fences go further and further out and then you have a wet season and then the water is beyond the fence and the property owner has to take the fence down. I want to see it in such a way that the fence is never there in the first place. What is essential to happen is, that mark has to be far enough back that it is unlikely that the fence will ever go out into the water. I'd like to hear deputations on this, but I'd also like the mover of the bill and other members of this



House to have an opportunity to further define the high-water mark.

I want to commend the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this forward and reintroducing it again. As I've said so often on private members' bills, it is a shame that members like the member from Niagara Falls have to introduce and reintroduce a bill that is probably, again here today, going to pass with the consent of all sides of the House. It did last time, did it not? I think it did. But if it didn't, it should have. And it will likely happen again this time: that it's introduced with all the best intentions, with everyone speaking in favour of it, with everyone understanding what the bill contains, with everyone wanting it to have public input, go to second reading and one day become law.

We here in this House think—or most of us think—that the private members' bills are sometimes some of the best pieces of legislation that come here. Unfortunately, the majority of these best pieces of legislation never see the light of day. Almost every single private member's bill that has occurred in this House in the nearly 10 years that I have been here died on the order paper at second reading. If it does go to committee, the committee hears it, but it very seldom gets third reading. Only those scheduled few at the end of the year that are negotiated by the House leaders, that the government permits to come forward and to pass, actually come into law.

With some private members' bills, the opportunity is made available that the government will seize upon the bill and incorporate it into their own legislation and it will see effect that way. But it seems to me that if this place is to work, then we need to salute the efforts of the member from Niagara Falls. The government members need to be able to convince the government, which has a majority on every single committee in this House, to allow some of these bills to go forward. You cannot sit back there—and I say this to the government members—week after week and see your colleagues come up with good ideas that need to be passed and be content to allow them to die on the order paper. Please say that this is a good idea. Vote for it. And when we leave this place today, should it pass, go back to your caucus and say, "We don't want this bill"—or the 100 other good bills that have been put forward over the life of this Parliament—"to simply die." This is an opportunity to do something meaningful for the people of Ontario.

1430

Now, since I've been much younger, I've enjoyed going along the shorelines to go smelt fishing; I've enjoyed going along the shorelines for walks, to watch the bird life, to go swimming, to do a hundred things that Ontarians take for granted. I can tell you, at certain points in my life I have been accosted and stopped by someone who has said, "This is private property." My answer always was, even in my youth—my father taught me this valuable lesson, that they could own the land but they don't own the water—to simply step out into the water, where that was at all possible, and challenge the property owner to come out and take me out of the water. That, of

course, would be assault, as my father explained to me, because they have no right to own the water in Ontario.

In some places in Canada they do, and that's why, if you ever go to places like New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, up the Restigouche, if somebody wanted to go salmon fishing, the property owners own not only the property, but the river as well.

We cannot allow that to happen in Ontario. We need to make sure that everyone who wants to make recreational use of our waterways, everyone who wants an opportunity to enjoy nature and to simply get away in Ontario, has that chance. This is not something for the privileged few, for the rich, for those who happen to own a piece of property in a specific location. It is a birthright, I believe, for all Ontarians.

Other countries and other jurisdictions have agreed with this. If you go around the world and you look at some of them, you can see other states—other US states have already enacted this type of legislation. Many of the Caribbean islands, seeing the wealth that they have—it's not a Great Lake, it's an ocean, and perhaps the ocean is a little bit easier to define in terms of high-water marks, because it does not fluctuate as much as do our lakes and rivers or the Great Lakes. But they have unlimited access for all of their people so that their people who live there don't have to look at some big high-rise hotel that's being built by foreign interests for foreign tourists to stay in, and hear, "You can't go to that beach." A country like Barbados says it belongs to everybody; that beach belongs to everybody. I think we have to—I'm saying this for the benefit of the clerks' table, perhaps, which understands this best of all. It belongs literally to everyone, and we in Ontario have to do no less.

We have to look at other US states along the Great Lakes, which are starting to look seriously at this same phenomenon and are starting to enact types of legislation that will allow for public access of our truly great resort areas.

I note that the two chief areas where this has been a problem, or at least a problem reported to me in the newspapers, are along the shores near Fort Erie and along the shores in Tiny township, in and around the Owen Sound area. That is what's reported. That is what I see. But I'm sure it's happening elsewhere. I'm sure it's happening all over this province, where people are taking it onto themselves, in a belief that this is their property and no one else can share it and they want to live there alone. We have to put an end to that. I support the member's efforts to do exactly that. We will support this bill at second reading.

I especially want to thank groups like the Ontario Shorewalk Association, the property owners and others who have brought this issue forward and continue to bring this issue forward. This is something that all members should take a very hard look at. I know that there are some members of the Legislature who like to champion property ownership and the rights of private property. There are even some people who suggest that this should be put into the Constitution. I think it was left



out of the Constitution for very good reason, and that is because the public good and the public will is every bit as important and sometimes trumps that of property ownership. This is one of the cases where I firmly believe that it does.

The member from Niagara Falls has it right. We in Ontario need to make it right as well. People in Ontario deserve an unfettered right to access the greatest jewels that we have, the greatest opportunity for themselves and their families. Regardless of whether they are wealthy enough to own property, regardless of whether they live in that neighbourhood permanently or are simply visiting it, they have an unfettered and unqualified right to go forward and to enjoy everything that Ontario gives.

I ask all members of the House, on behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, to please vote for his bill. And for government members especially, please go back to your next caucus meeting and impress upon the Premier and the cabinet that this is a bill that should go forward, like so many others. Do not make him come back and do this a third time in the next House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to stand up and enter the debate on Bill 32, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes, which was introduced by my colleague the member from Niagara Falls. I listened to the debate that took place, and I listened to the member from Niagara Falls state the reasoning behind this bill. It made sense to me. I want to listen to the member from Beaches–East York, and I'm going to support this bill after we finish the debate and it's time for a vote, because I think it's important for all of us to enjoy the beauty of this province.

I'm from London, Ontario. We don't have a lake. We only have rivers and ponds. But we enjoy going to Lake Erie, to Port Stanley or to Lake Huron, to walk along the beach and enjoy the weather and the environment. Sometimes, if we want to swim, we can swim. It's shocking sometimes when you see a lot of big houses segregated, with fences around the houses, blocking the way to go through. So the member from Niagara Falls is asking reasonable questions to create some rules and regulations in this place to allow people to enjoy the nature of this province, the beauty of this province, because it's important.

People from across the planet want to visit Ontario. They have a right to walk along the shore and enjoy the beauty of the lakes. They can swim if they want to, and they can enjoy the beauty of these things.

Also, he was reasonable when he said that maybe we will offend people if we use motorcycles or a vehicle to go through. He is not asking for that. He is asking for passage on foot, because we don't want to offend the owners of the houses along the lake. It's incredibly important to share the wealth of nature with all of us in the province of Ontario, with all of us around the globe.

My sister-in-law came to visit from Lebanon almost two weeks ago. The first thing she said to me was, "I'm

wondering if you can take me to Niagara Falls," because Niagara Falls is well known in the whole world—the beauty of the Falls and the nature.

We went, despite the cold weather, and we walked along the Falls. She was shocked, because she was expecting to pay a fee to enter and walk and see the beauty of Niagara Falls. She was happy because she didn't have to pay a fee. She walked, and nobody asked her about anything else. She enjoyed the nature and the beauty of the Falls.

Niagara Falls is a landmark, and so many different lakes are landmarks in the province of Ontario. Many people from around the planet want to come and see our landmarks, whether it's the lakes, the Falls or the rivers, and they should be accessible for all of us because they're places where we can attract tourism, where we can attract people to go and enjoy themselves.

Also, we don't want to create an area only designated for rich people. They can build a palace, they can build a resort, and then also put a fence around the resort and block all the people from walking through or going through.

I listened to the remarks from the member from Oshawa, and I was very impressed with his technicalities, talking about the water in the spring, in the fall or the summertime, and how it shrinks back and forth—also, when we get hurricanes, how the water expands and also shrinks. We're lucky in the province of Ontario that we don't have tsunamis. That's what happened in Japan, where most of the houses shifted almost 10 feet away from the lakeshore.

1440

I think it's important for all of us to support the member from Niagara Falls and pass this bill, and also to continue to talk about the important things and important elements of our society being open to the public, open to the population of Ontario to enjoy, especially nature, which many people from around the planet want to come and see. It would be unfair for many people who cannot afford to go to a resort or expensive hotel; they can afford to walk along the lake and enjoy the beauty of nature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak and support Bill 32. Hopefully, all of us in this House support it and it becomes law in the province of Ontario, which opens up the province and especially the lakeshore on the Great Lakes to all of us to walk and enjoy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

The honourable member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I will use the rest of the time to make just a few more comments and thank my colleagues for their input.

First, I want to say that I'm really pleased that a number of people have taken the time to come out here, because they had the opportunity to listen to some of my colleagues on the other side and hear some of their concerns, which I've heard as well from across this province. I think it's beneficial that you sort of hear both sides.



I also want to make one other comment. As an MPP for eight years, the best time in Parliament is private members' bills time. I've often said that's the time when there really is no politics. We speak from our hearts; we speak what we believe. I sometimes wish we could do private members' bills three or four days a week, because there are some fabulous bills that have been put forward by members from all three parties, some really innovative things that would be of benefit to the people of Ontario. One of the special times when I love being in Parliament is during private members' bills time.

I just want to close, in the time I have left, by sharing a couple of emails I received from different people to show the amount of support for the bill across this province. This came from Waterdown: "We support the right-of-passage act that has been proposed, and we sincerely hope this bill will be taken very seriously and passed quickly. As a family who have walked the beaches and the shores of Lake Huron in particular for 50-plus years, we feel very, very strongly that the shores of all the Great Lakes be kept open to all who wish to walk there. Developers and cottage owners have often had the strong voice in this matter locally, and now it is time for an equal voice on the side of the passage act. If it's not passed, the opportunity for those who cannot afford a lakefront property to walk along the shores will be gone and one more little bit of freedom taken away."

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention that today is also about having solutions. That's what this bill is about. I just wanted to touch a bit on the United States. They have what is known as the public trust doctrine in the United States. In a country where private property rights are so deeply ingrained, it seems counterintuitive that a public right of access to the beaches of oceans and inland waters is recognized in every state. Nevertheless, such a right has been preserved in a legal doctrine, and it's known as the public trust. In essence, this document holds that the area below the high-water mark and the shoreline is held in trust for the public.

In Michigan, a group known as Save Our Shoreline, composed of mainly wealthy shoreline owners, challenged that doctrine. They said that they challenged the legislation for people to have these rights, not to exclude beach walkers but rather to prevent people from holding parties and lighting camp fires in front of private homes. I want to tell you that it went to the Supreme Court of Michigan, and in the decision, the Michigan Supreme Court held that the members of the public were entitled to walk the shores of the Great Lakes between the ordinary high-water mark, and under the public trust doctrine, the owners do not hold title to their property according to the terms of the deed and subject to the public trust.

Bill 32 in its simplest form just says that people would have the right to walk along the Great Lakes of Ontario and be able to enjoy themselves. It does have a number of exclusions, and that was mentioned: You can't drive vehicles, you can't have campfires, you can't stop and put out blankets,

You can't do any of those things. There are a lot of very positive things to protect the rights of homeowners. But in essence, it gives you that opportunity to enjoy our Great Lakes.

I want to conclude with just thanking my colleagues from Beaches and from Fanshawe as well for their comments.

There are some very positive things that were said, and that is, as the bill goes forward, in essence—you know, I'm pretty straightforward. These people came out, and I was very clear; I want to tell the House this. I was very fortunate, because one of my colleagues decided that he was not going to use his private member's time and he made it available, so I was able to access this time. As I explained to the people who have come here, it gave me a chance—because the bill cannot go forward. This is the reality. It's the end of our session and I did not want to bring them all the way up here with an expectation of a bill being able to go forward. But I said, "I would like you to come up. I will bring the bill to second reading so you can hear what's being said around the House, so it can get back out into the public domain."

I'm committed, once I'm re-elected—that's a little presumptuous; hopefully I'm re-elected—to bringing the bill forward again, and this kind of debate and input from the House and from my colleagues will help maybe redefine the bill, take in some of the concerns that were mentioned, that maybe need to be addressed. When it's brought back for the next session of Parliament after the election, then I'm confident that we will be able to move the bill forward and have it passed.

So I just want to conclude and say thank you very much to the House for allowing me to say a few words on this bill, and thank you to everyone who has taken all the time out of their busy schedules to come all the way up here. From Fort Erie to Toronto is a long trip, but it just shows, for everyone else, how passionate you are and how much you believe in this bill. So from my heart I thank you very much for that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

Seeing none, the honourable member does have two additional minutes if he would like to use it for a wrap-up.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I will stop with that. I think we've covered it very well. I appreciate it, and I'm one of those who, when it's time not to speak any further, I don't speak any further. So thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The time for Mr. Craitor's ballot item has now expired. We will vote on the item in about 100 minutes' time.

#### NOVICE DRIVER "P" PLATE ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 EXIGEANT UNE PLAQUE «P» POUR LES CONDUCTEURS DÉBUTANTS

Mr. Flynn moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 161, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require vehicles driven by novice drivers to display



markers or identifying devices / Projet de loi 161, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour exiger que les véhicules conduits par des conducteurs débutants affichent des marques ou des moyens d'identification.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Flynn.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon and begin the debate on this issue. The bill before us is called the Novice Driver "P" Plate Act, and it would, if passed today, require young drivers in Ontario to place a "P" plate on their vehicle identifying themselves to other drivers and pedestrians as a novice driver. It's a very simple idea. It's an idea that is used in a lot of other countries and jurisdictions around the world. But much like many other bills that are brought forward, I think it's common sense.

It's a bill that's unique, though, because of who really brought it forward. This is a bill that is co-sponsored by my colleagues in the House from Newmarket-Aurora and from Timmins-James Bay, who I think will be speaking a little bit later on this. The idea, however, and the actual piece of draft legislation, similar to what we are debating today, was brought forward by Alex Don.

Now, Alex, some of you will remember, was a former page in this House. Alex was in grade 7 or 8 at one point in his life and was living in Oakville at the time. He's now in grade 12 at Assumption high school in Burlington. He's doing quite well, and he's off to university or college next. But before he did that, he started working on this project after he paid a visit to Australia in 2009 and saw the success of this program in another jurisdiction. He felt, as a young driver himself, that this provided a great safety system and something that the province of Ontario should be looking at. So it became his goal to bring this to Ontario by enacting a change in the Highway Traffic Act to introduce what is a very simple concept of a six-by-six-inch "P" plate that will be attached to any car when the vehicle is being driven by a young or novice driver. And the best way to think of this is as a large fridge magnet that would go on your car.

1450

This is a quote of Alex's when he was interviewed by the media when he first came up with the idea. He said that "since young drivers are the most likely ones to have a fatal car accident and since 70% of all the deaths of young people in Canada are as a result of motor vehicle accidents, I thought someone should really make an effort to see what improvements might be made." That's exactly what he did, and as a young man, we should commend Alex for his courage in bringing this forward, because it takes a special sort of person to take this type of step. That's why I'm extremely supportive of Alex bringing this initiative forward, and I suspect that's why he's got support from all parties in the House, because of the responsible attitude he has taken towards this and the courage he has shown.

I'm really encouraged to see a young person who has decided to take part in the legislative process, and he's

bringing forward ideas that are designed to improve the safety of his peers. I'm grateful for the support, as I said, that was provided by the member for Newmarket-Aurora and the member for Timmins-James Bay, because I think they share the feeling that this is also about improving young driver safety, and more importantly, it starts a discussion about how we can make our roads safer.

The objective of Alex's plan is simply to reduce fatalities—deaths—among young new drivers and improve road safety in Ontario for all drivers. The plan is to accomplish this by making a simple change in new-driver licensing legislation. I think this is an initiative that has a lot of merit. I'm sure that all the bugs haven't been ironed out of it. I'm sure that there are some changes that other members in the House might like to see. I'm sure there may be some amendments that would be worthy of being brought forward. But I think, at the end of the day, it's an initiative that should be examined and treated very, very seriously.

There are two jurisdictions that come to mind when you think of other places that employ this type of system: a province in Canada, that being British Columbia, and the jurisdiction where Alex first saw this, that is, in Australia—I believe it was in New South Wales. There have been successes in those jurisdictions. Australia saw deaths from motor vehicle accidents amongst young people drop considerably. In some cases, after the introduction of this program, the amount dropped to the lowest levels they've seen in Australia since the 1940s.

The benefits obviously include increased awareness of the novice driver on the road. Other drivers who are using the highways or the roads would know that there was a person driving that car who was just learning how to drive. Law enforcement officers, for example, will also have an easier job. They can easily spot the "P" plate on the car and know that the driver who is driving that car has unique driving obligations that are already set in legislation that has been passed by this House. Society in general is going to benefit if there are less serious and fatal accidents. From a budgetary point of view, obviously our own health care costs in the province will be less. There's no reason why this shouldn't drop insurance rates for drivers as well.

I think the value of the bill becomes apparent the more you think about it, and if we sent this off to committee and started a discussion on this, I think the debate and the details that might come forward would prove that this is a bill that is worthy of being passed.

But I think we need to get back to the other half of the point of this bill: about a young person being engaged in the legislative process. That's something that I think we should be encouraging at all levels and from all parties. It is a very appropriate week for this type of a debate. Members will know that this is Education Week. Many of us have events planned in our own communities celebrating our publicly funded school systems, the teachers in those schools and the students in those schools. This is a great example of how our school system created an environment and supported the efforts of one of their



own students. The bill has the full support of the Halton Catholic District School Board,

Michael Pautler, director of education for the board, said, "Alex's commitment to this initiative is truly noteworthy. The benefits and the implications of this program resonate on many levels, and Alex's efforts serve as a model for the proactive engagement of youth to effect positive, tangible change" right in their own community.

Support and guidance for this bill was provided by a very special teacher, Mr. Fernando Costa, who is a youth councillor at Assumption high school and has also taught in Oakville and other areas in Halton as well.

Let me read you another quote from Alex about his time here and how that related to the bill that he has brought forward. He says, "I'm grateful for the training I received as a legislative page and the opportunity to engage with stakeholders and politicians to move forward. I want to say most of all, education empowers everyone, and our political system gives us the freedom to act. That's what my "P" plate process shows. I am a young person, a new driver and I have acted according to what I have been taught and believe." He ends it by saying, "How awesome is that?"

Earlier this week, we saw a very unique occurrence where several young people were elected to the House of Commons. Quite similar to people of different ages, it appears there's some incredible young people in there and some who we may be wondering about. That's no different than other people we elect on a regular basis or even around this House.

When I visit schools in my community, I often tell them that when they come down to Queen's Park and they look at who has been elected in the province of Ontario, they'll see people of different cultures, and they'll see mainly men—some women but nowhere near enough. But there's one group you don't see elected at Queen's Park, and that's young people. I think they are missing a voice here. That's why I'm so happy to bring forward this bill because it does give a voice to a young person.

I should point out that many other community members have expressed their support. Here's what a few of them have said.

Jim Commerford, president and CEO of the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford, said, "We are deeply committed to the health and well-being of all young people, and we find the initiative of this young man worthy of attention and action. We formally add our voice in support of this."

Here's somebody everyone will know. Mr. Ken Lewenza of the Canadian Auto Workers says, "Road safety is important to all of us, particularly in ensuring that new drivers are treated with the necessary caution and care. Therefore, identifying provisional vehicle drivers to the public makes perfect sense."

We've even got the chief of police in our own community of Halton. Chief Gary Crowell says, "Alex's "P" program translates ideals into action by readily identifying less experienced drivers to enhance their safety

and the safety of others. It is obvious that Alex has done a great deal of research into this project which has resulted in a quality proposal. I commend him for this initiative. The Halton Regional Police Services endorses Alex's "P" program, and we applaud his hard work in helping to make our communities safer."

These are voices we should pay attention to. When a young person comes to the Legislature and presents us with an idea that directly impacts upon people in his age group and our age group, I think we should take it seriously.

As legislators, I don't think this happens often enough. I look forward to hearing the debate this afternoon because it's not only about the content of the bill, which I think is worthy of support and is at least of worthy of further examination through the committee system, but it is also about a young person engaging in the political system.

We've just seen a federal election where the turnout was not what we would expect it to be and not what we would hope it would. We saw young people perhaps begin to get engaged through vote mobs, I think they call them, and social media. I think a lot of thanks has to go out to Rick Mercer for the work he did in encouraging young people to become part of the political system.

But today, what we have before us is a very practical example of how we can assist a young person in feeling that they're part of their political process, that if anyone like Alex out there in our own communities has a good idea, they shouldn't feel afraid or intimidated about bringing it forward to their own elected officials, whether that be a town council, a regional council, a school board, the provincial government, the federal government. We're elected to listen to people. We have a young person here today who wants us to listen him. He's done a lot of work on it. I think that all parties would agree—we don't always agree on everything—that there's more room in the legislative process for young people.

**1500**

By showing your support for Alex today and for this bill, I think you'd demonstrate that we're really serious about this and we are prepared to listen. That's going to encourage other young people to step forward and bring forward even better ideas to make Ontario a better place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** As co-sponsor of this private member's bill, I too want to begin by welcoming Alex Don to the Legislature this afternoon. Please, if members would—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It's not often that a proponent of a bill observes it being debated from the gallery. It's a real honour for me to speak to this bill, particularly because the individual who's observing the debate of a bill that he initiated is 18 years old, and with that 18 years of age obviously comes a great deal of maturity and responsibility and perseverance. When I say "perseverance," it's because Alex has not only learned about the legislative



process in bringing this forward but he has also experienced first-hand the political dimensions that are at work in this place. He achieved something that isn't very common; namely, to convince members from all three political parties to agree to sponsor the same bill. For that, I think we should applaud Alex one more time. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I also want to acknowledge Fernando Costa, his teacher and counsellor, and David Medhurst, who have encouraged Alex as he worked on this initiative. I know that he's grateful as well for their support.

Alex Don is a shining example of the many Ontario youth who are demonstrating a sense of civic duty and community activism. When we have an opportunity to encourage that civic involvement, we have a responsibility to do so. I want to again thank Fernando Costa and David Medhurst for doing precisely that for Alex, for providing that encouragement and coming alongside and providing assistance to him.

It was in that same spirit of encouragement that I and my colleagues the member for Oakville and the member for Timmins–James Bay didn't hesitate to lend our support for the bill as co-sponsors. The fact that we're debating this bill also demonstrates how our parliamentary system of government can truly empower individuals to effect real change. This should be an encouraging message to all, especially to young people right across this province.

Often young people, particularly, question whether they can make a difference in the political process, and through this initiative, Alex has proven that they can. One person can make a difference. One young person with the kind of energy and dedication that Alex has had to this can make a great difference.

As was mentioned, he's a high school student at Assumption Catholic secondary school in Burlington, a former legislative page who I'm sure often sat in this place and was wondering, "What in the world is going on here?" Yet, rather than be discouraged by what he saw, he was actually motivated to become part of this process. We're very proud of this young man.

He came up with the idea that would form the basis of this bill during a family trip to Australia in 2009, where he noticed that novice drivers are required to display a symbol on their vehicles that informs other drivers to be patient and to exercise additional caution in sharing the road because that notice on those cars indicated that the person who is behind the wheel is a learner, is a novice driver.

This bill before us would require novice drivers in Ontario to place that "P" plate on their vehicle so that they could be identified as a novice driver. Alex has already been quoted by the member from Oakville for his motivation. He understood that in fact there are many young people in this province and throughout this country who unfortunately lose their lives as a result of vehicle crashes. In his words, "I thought the "P" plate

made so much common sense; I had to push it forward." And push it forward he did. That's why we're here debating this bill today.

In describing his own driving experience with a G1 licence, especially at rush hour and in parking lots, Alex said, "If more people knew I was a new driver, they might be more courteous or aware."

Actually, I'm thinking of getting one of those plates for my car, because the challenge we often have on the road is that people are not courteous; they're not aware. As a result of that we unfortunately have many unnecessary collisions on our roads.

The objective is to help reduce fatalities among novice drivers and improve road safety in Ontario by adopting this identification program. I want to make it very clear that this is for novice drivers. What is a novice driver? In the province of Ontario, "novice driver" is defined as "any driver ... who holds a G1, G2, M1, or M2 class driver's licence."

Essentially, it's not just focusing on young drivers. Certainly the vast majority of individuals who hold this class of licence would be young drivers, but there are also many others who come to this country and have their Ontario driver's licence for the first time, and aren't otherwise familiar with our road conditions and the rules of our roads. They too would fall into this classification of novice drivers.

I think it's important that we also recognize that this is not something out of the blue. This has been in place in New South Wales, Australia, since the late 1990s, and in fact, according to the records in that jurisdiction, it has resulted in significant road safety improvements as well as a reduction in fatalities among novice drivers.

A similar program has now been adopted in British Columbia, where a new driver must put an "N" plate, standing for "novice," on their vehicle for a period of 24 months. In Australia, the impetus behind the implementation of this program was the number of deaths involving young drivers. On April 14, 2011, Australian senator Trish Crossin was quoted as saying, "Last year, 334 young Australians aged between 17 and 25 died in road accidents.... It is a fact that young people, under the age of 25, are more likely to be involved in a car crash than any other age group...." Unfortunately, those statistics hold true for Ontario and Canada as well.

After implementing the "P" plate program in Queensland, Australia, police there reported significant reductions in fatalities, with 77 deaths in 2007 compared with 58 in 2008 and 53 in 2009. The number of young people injured in crashes has also been significantly reduced.

We have the evidence in other jurisdictions of the positive impact of this program. The "P" plate that is displayed on vehicles driven by probationary or novice drivers makes other drivers on the road aware that such cars are driven by inexperienced drivers, and I think that is simply a practical measure that would serve us all well. The program likewise allows law enforcement officers to readily spot a novice driver. The reason that is important—and I believe one of the reasons police services



support this—is that it helps identify novice drivers, who have some very specific restrictions in terms of how and where they can drive in this province.

For example, novice drivers in Ontario are restricted from driving on 400-series highways. There's also zero tolerance for blood alcohol content at all times. Only one other passenger is allowed in the front seat with a novice driver, and novice drivers are restricted from driving from midnight to 5 a.m. The benefits in terms of reducing fatal and serious accidents among novice drivers in particular are the most compelling argument in favour of the implementation of this program.

1510

I just want to make reference to the number of stakeholders in this province whom we have heard from already. I'm sure it's not just myself; probably every member in the Legislature has heard from stakeholders.

The member from Oakville has already referenced the fact that Halton Regional Police Chief Gary Crowell has formally endorsed this. Endorsements were also received from the Halton Catholic District School Board; the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; as has been mentioned, Ken Lewenza of the CAW; Jim Commerford, president and CEO of the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford; and Dr. Peter Fitzgerald, president of McMaster Children's Hospital.

We can't forget to mention that Alex's efforts to promote this program received the Toronto Star's laurel on January 22, 2011. I don't know how many members in this House have ever received a laurel from the Toronto Star. I can tell you, Speaker, I have not, and I may never; I probably never will. So a special congratulations to Alex on that achievement.

Once again, I want to commend Alex for his sense of responsibility as a young man that motivated him to work so diligently to bring this initiative forward. The result, the passage of this bill and the implementation of it, will, without question, help save lives, and we will owe that to Alex Don's initiative. Thank you, Alex.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I too am glad to participate in this debate. It is not often, as my good friend the member from—

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Newmarket–Aurora. I don't know the riding names. I've been here for 21 years; I never paid attention.

I just want to say that he is right, that it's not often that you get an opportunity to make change in the way that Alex is making change here. There are some members in the House who have been here for a number of years who would like the opportunity to pass a bill in the way that this particular bill will probably get passed. It's somewhat ironic. It goes to show that if youth want to be engaged in the process of making legislation and being involved civically, either municipally, provincially or federally, if you set your mind to it and the conditions are right, you can do so.

It was mentioned that Alex was a page in the Legislature here some years ago. When he came to my office, I guess it was some four, five or six months ago, when we first started talking about this particular idea of his, I recognized him as he walked by and I wasn't too sure why until he pointed out that he had been a page in the Legislature. I guess, at that time, he was struck with what happened in this House and thought, "Here's an avenue to effect change that I can follow as a citizen." I just want to commend Alex for doing that.

Far too often, too many people in our society—and let's not talk about youth; let's talk about all citizens in our society—are not as engaged as they need to be in what we call democracy. I just look at what's happened in the Middle East over the last month or two. We see the people of Egypt, we see the people of Syria, we see the people of Libya, we see the people all over the Middle East who are literally dying in order to have the right to be engaged politically in their own countries, and we take it for granted here.

So when you see somebody like Alex stand up and say, "I want to be engaged as a citizen. I understand it's not just my right as a citizen to be engaged but it's my duty, and I'm going to be involved and I'll do what I can by being involved in the process," such as he has, I think our hat has got to go off to him. And we've got to say to other people, young and old, to be engaged, because I think you can learn a lot by watching what this young man has done.

The bill is a good idea. When he first brought it to me, I thought, "Jeez, that's a good idea." In fact, I remember reading some articles on this, as transportation critic some years ago, not only in Australia, but it seems to me that at one time this was done in some places in eastern Canada, if I remember correctly. The idea is a very simple one, as was said earlier: to put a large letter "P" in the windshield so other people know you're a novice driver and they should give you a little bit more patience, a little bit more understanding, and not get mad if it's taking you a little bit longer to park or if your driving may be a little bit slower—hopefully not a little bit faster—and we need to have regard that this is a novice driver.

I know that with all bills—and I'm sure that Alex has gotten this comment from some of his friends at school—some people would say, "I don't like it." Some people would say, "I'd rather nobody knows that I'm a novice driver, and I just go out and do what I want to do." But I say to those who might have said that to Alex or might have thought that themselves, sometimes, change is something that is hard to accept, especially when it affects us directly. I think you need to look back at what the examples are where this Legislature and others around the world have done things that have broken the mould.

I'm young enough in this House—I've been here for 21 years. I remember that drinking and driving used to almost be an accepted practice in this province. All of us in this House of my age can relate to stories where family



members were frequently drinking and driving with kids in the car. It was almost seen as something that just happened. It took some mothers who lost their husbands and their kids to drunken drivers to go out and to do the work that Alex did and educate not only the public, but, quite frankly, the members of this assembly that something had to be done. As a result of the work of MADD and others that were involved—and it was because of citizen engagement like Alex is having with us on this particular initiative—that we not only changed the legislation—and this is to my point that I want to speak to, Alex—but we've changed the attitude. That's what this bill is all about: trying to change the attitudes of those people out there.

First of all, do recognize you are a novice driver and that you can't take the car and do some of the things that you think you can do—because you really don't have the experience—and for those who are interacting with you on the roads and in various places across Ontario. I'm a pilot, and there's a saying when you first start flying: There's no such thing as an old, bold pilot. I guess that holds very true for this particular instance, because there is no such thing as an old, bold driver either, if you continue doing those kinds of things.

I just say to Alex, I think this makes a lot of sense. Since the idea was brought, I've had a chance, as a critic, to canvass some people out there who know something about these issues, to see just to what degree it would be supported or not supported. I spoke to the police associations in Ontario, the OPPA, and others in my own local municipal force. They see this as being plenty of common sense. They say that this is something that's long overdue and it would be quite helpful—and quite helpful for police officers to know as well, not because they want to focus in on young people, but just to understand what's going on in their own environment as they interrelate with the drivers in our municipalities across Ontario.

I also had an opportunity to talk to some people who are very involved with youth when it comes to driving, and those are the people who do the driving schools. When I raised it with them, they said that this makes ultimate sense. They feel that what's lacking at times when a young person goes and gets their licence is the experience that's needed in order to learn that certain things are not good habits, that you need to break them and that it takes some time to be able to learn those skills.

We will support this legislation. We will allow it to go to committee. I would hope—there's not a lot of time in this Parliament—that we can do that fairly quickly so that we can send a signal not just to Alex, but to other people out in Ontario that being engaged in the process actually can make something happen. I think it's incumbent upon us in this House, especially members on the government side, to ensure that this bill does get to committee—I don't think it needs a lot of time, maybe a day—and we try to bring this bill back for third reading this spring.

The House will rise, I would think, sometime in May, maybe at the latest in early June. If it's not passed by

third reading then, basically, it'll die on the order paper, and we'll have to start this all over again. I'm sure next year, you're going to be very busy in post-secondary education and may not have as much time on your hands to come and lobby all of us to move this thing forward. So for Alex and other people out there, now the ball is in our court. We need to take the responsibility that we're being asked to take, and that is to say, let's allow the bill to go forward, get it into committee so that if there is something we need to amend in the bill, we can do so reasonably, and then bring the bill back for third reading—we don't, I believe, need a long debate at third reading—so this bill can actually pass.

What a message I think that is, if it does pass, to youth and to all those citizens in the province of Ontario: to know that you can make a difference, that you can go to your local member of provincial Parliament, as Alex has done here—he had to do quite a different process because it was late in our session—but you can make the difference. In a lot of cases, people don't recognize that members have the ability to bring forward private members' bills, and most of our bills come from the ideas of our constituents. I think it allows the public to understand that you don't have to be cynical about politics. It is about change. It is about making things work. It is about trying to find solutions to problems that exist within our society. It is about good ideas. It is all of those things that make a society function. I think that if we're able to move this forward for third reading, it would be a good thing.

1520

I just want to end on this note and say a few words in French. I know that there are many students out there watching in the francophone schools, because some of them have talked to me. I would like to say a few words en regard de ce projet de loi parce que je pense que ce qu'Alex est en train de nous dire, c'est que n'importe qui qui décide qu'il veut avoir un effet sur la politique provinciale, fédérale ou municipale a l'habileté de le faire s'il décide de s'engager. Le fait qu'il s'engage, tel que l'a fait Alex, nous inspire à dire que n'importe quoi est possible. Si c'est la question, quand le public dit, « Écoute, il n'y a rien qu'on puisse faire. La politique est toujours la même chose. Ça ne fait pas de différence pour qui on vote. Il n'y a rien qui change », je pense qu'Alex est en train de démontrer que ce n'est pas le cas.

Dans ce cas-ci, Alex a dit qu'il avait une bonne idée. Il est allé visiter tous les députés—son député local et les députés de l'Assemblée. On lui a donné une suggestion, dans le temps, que ce serait plus important, on pense, d'essayer de le passer comme un projet de loi avec trois député, un de chaque parti, qui sont capables de le supporter. Alex a fait l'ouvrage qu'il avait besoin de faire pour amener ce projet de loi à ce point-ci. Là que ce projet de loi est ici à l'Assemblée, je suis convaincu que le projet de loi va passer la deuxième lecture. S'il ne passe pas la deuxième lecture, je vais tomber à terre, franchement.

La cle, et ce qui est vraiment le plus important, c'est ce que nous autres faisons une fois que c'est passé la



deuxième lecture. On a besoin de s'assurer que ce projet de loi parte de la deuxième lecture au comité, et une fois qu'on a fini au comité—peut-être une journée—envoyer ce projet de loi à la troisième lecture pour que ce projet de loi puisse être mis en vigueur avant que cette Assemblée se dissolve plus tard ce mois de mai ou au début du mois de juin. Pourquoi? Pas seulement pour Alex, dans le sens que c'est son projet de loi et il aimerait le voir avancer; je pense que c'est pour la question dont Alex essaie de nous parler à travers ce projet de loi. C'est de dire au monde : « Oui, tu peux faire une différence »; que cette Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, nos conseils municipaux et notre Parlement fédéral sont des places qui sont là pour le public—pour être capable d'avancer des dossiers qui sont importants et de s'assurer qu'à la fin de la journée, le public a l'habileté de faire une différence. Si on passe ce projet de loi, je pense qu'on dit ça en volume.

Again, on behalf of New Democrats, I want to say that we will be supporting this. I'd be very surprised if anybody votes against it. I look forward to this bill getting to committee. I will give it my support, and I really do want to see this bill come back for third reading, for final reading.

Finally, to Alex and all of those who were involved: Congratulations. This is a very well-done job on your part. Thank you very much for bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It certainly is a pleasure for me to rise in support of Bill 161, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require vehicles driven by novice drivers to display markers or identifying devices.

I just have a couple of minutes to speak on this bill, so I just want to make a couple of comments. First of all, the fact that this is a co-sponsored bill: Having come to this place relatively recently, in 2007, and never having felt particularly adamantly partisan, it is certainly a pleasure to see all three parties co-sponsoring this bill. My congratulations to Alex Don for approaching all three parties with his idea so that it could be brought to this place as private members' business, an idea that I think everyone can clearly support.

In my own case, as a child growing up in England, seeing a bright red "L" on a driver's licence, as was certainly the case in those days, and I believe to the present day, was a sign that, clearly, here was a learner driver; the L was for "learner." I remember my mother explaining to me that one day I would also be in that position, and I actually aspired to have that L on a vehicle one day.

I was very surprised—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You still have an L.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** In fact, a red L, too.

In fact, when I came to Canada as a teenager, I was astonished not to see those red Ls on vehicles here.

I think this is an idea, clearly, that other jurisdictions have embraced. We've heard some statistics related to the fact that in Australia they've seen a decline in injury, and as a physician, any decline in injury or, of course,

fatality is something that I certainly commend. The preventive aspects of this bill are extremely important.

I was considering what the effect of this is. Not only can other drivers perhaps take a more defensive approach to their driving when they see that there is a novice driver on the road, but also perhaps other individuals considering being passengers in a vehicle with a novice driver. We all know that many passengers in a vehicle can be somewhat distracting, so there may be some parents out there who, knowing that their children are going to be driven by a novice driver, may have some second thoughts, may ask some questions as to how many passengers will be in that vehicle. So there are all sorts of spin-off benefits for people to be alerted to this situation.

I'm certainly pleased that our government has taken a number of steps, including zero blood alcohol for those in the graduated licensing program. I think this is another incremental step towards improving safety on our roads. Really, it's hard to see any possible downside to this bill.

I'm fairly optimistic—it has been mentioned by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay—that a lot of what is being proposed could be accomplished even through regulation.

It would seem to me that this is something that we should move forward on expeditiously, and I look forward to seeing bright red Ps on our roads in the near future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to speak to Bill 161 and to recognize, as others have, the young man, Alex Don, who brought this idea forward, having been a page here and seeing how this process works, and to congratulate him on reaching out to a member from each of the three caucuses—the member from Oakville, the member from Newmarket—Aurora and the member from Timmins—James Bay—who have all spoken eloquently about the importance of this bill. I think we are all optimistic that it will continue through the process.

I was interested as I was listening to my friend across the way from Oak Ridges—Markham. She was speaking about the big red L. To keep it in a fairly non-partisan manner, we may want to get something like a big red L, a big orange D and a big blue C: "Learner: Drive Carefully." Maybe we can find a way to incorporate all of the partisanship and the non-partisanship in a fashion that would also express what the intent is here. Whether it's a P or an L or whatever it may be, it's all going to drive home the same idea.

Before I came to this place, in what I refer to as my first life—

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Your first wife?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** No, life; not wife. I can only afford one wife, and that's my first wife.

In my first life, after school, I was a high school teacher, and during that time I had the opportunity to interact with students, both in my teaching environment and in the environment where I worked with students as



the student council adviser. So I got to see the kids in a whole range of areas. But I had the unfortunate situation of a young man who lost his life with a couple of his friends, as a result of driving—the member for Timmins—James Bay spoke about alcohol use in driving. He lost his life with two other young people, on a Thanksgiving weekend, as a result of alcohol being used at that time. I think it's this kind of a bill, this kind of a process, this kind of driving change in behaviour that would help on that front, as it currently does and has done through the efforts of MADD, to identify for young people the importance of care.

1530

Even having left teaching, I notice it myself at this point in time. I've been driving now for quite a number of years. I notice, as I get older, that I have a greater tendency to drive even more defensively. I find myself physically watching the traffic in a different way. I find myself physically backing off from the vehicle ahead of me. I notice lane changes that I might not have noticed 30 years ago, and take that as a signal that I should be taking a little more defensive care in what's happening around me.

I think if I was driving and I saw a letter "P" identifying a novice driver, it would say to me, "Give this individual a little more room. Take marginally more time before you think you need to pass that person," because they are a novice driver. They're learning this process in a busy environment.

I am optimistic that this process will continue. I think there's tremendous value in it. Alex, congratulations to you on bringing it forward to the members who are tri-sponsoring this here this afternoon, and let's hope it does see committee and see itself back in this Legislature—ideally in this session, but if that's not the case, it won't be the first private member's initiative that had to have at least one reiteration. When that happens, it will be to the benefit of young people throughout the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for London—Fanshawe.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Like other members in this House, I'd like to enter the debate on Bill 161 and also congratulate Alex Don for his achievement, for reaching out to three members of the parties of the House and convincing them to sponsor his bill and bring his idea forward to be debated.

As you know, since we've gotten elected, we've seen a lot of pages come and go in this place. I know most of them, basically all of them, as part of the requirement, have to be smart and intelligent to be here, to be able to absorb and go under the leadership of Wayne and help us across the House here to deal with many different issues, to listen to a lot of speeches, listen to us in debates, witness so many private members' bills and witness the passage of bills and laws in the province of Ontario.

It's not strange to see a person like Alex Don—he was sitting somewhere in this House, watching many different debates and watching many different ideas come to

this House to be debated. Probably he thought to himself, "One day I want to be here taking place in the debate or, at least before I get that chance, I want to think about very important issues concerning me, concerning the youth of this province of Ontario," so it can be introduced, debated, supported, passed and can become a law. So Alex, congratulations.

To the member from Oakville, who came forward with this idea, I know he introduced a similar bill in the past about novice drivers in the province of Ontario. I'm very passionate about driving in the province of Ontario because I drive all the time from London to Toronto to be here. I've witnessed a lot of bad drivers and so many different accidents on the highway.

I think it's important. I introduced in the past a conditional driver's licence for seniors and people who cannot drive on the 400-series highways, and I think this is similar; it's to create some kind of attention. Many people who drive don't pay attention to others.

I know your idea is that you want to create some special plate, a special lettering or a special signal—a special something—to identify the novice driver, whether in the city or on the highway, and to be looked after, not to be passed; to be recognized as people who just started driving, to preserve lives in the province of Ontario—the lives of the youth who are driving and the lives of others who drive in the opposite way.

I know from the statistics we show, we see, we read, that almost 70% of the deaths in the province of Ontario are among youth due to novice drivers.

I think it's a very important bill. There are always a lot of different ideas brought to this House by many of the members, and we debate them and we get into the details. I see overall that Bill 160—I don't know what the details and what the requirements are in order to have a "P" licence on your car. I know we talk about overall, and the member from Timmins—James Bay mentioned that maybe we don't have to pass the law; maybe it can be done through regulations, through the authority of the minister, he can ask her staff or her ministry to add the "P" or add some kind of identification on any car that a novice driver is driving in the province of Ontario.

Alex, congratulations. To all the pages with us today: I guess we should learn from Alex. Hopefully, you can come back next year with a lot of different ideas and give them to us. We can sponsor them and deal with them to become law in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The member for Oakville has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I think this has proven to me, when I decided that I would use my private member's time in this way, that it was a sensible thing to do, because I think all the members have responded in a very non-partisan way and have recognized a good idea.

I do want to thank those members, starting with the member from Newmarket—Aurora and the member from Timmins—James Bay, who are both co-sponsors of the bill. Speakers to the bill included the member from Pickering—Scarborough East, the member from Oak



Ridges–Markham and finally the member from London–Fanshawe.

The member from York West came up to me and said, “If we have it for young people, why not for seniors?” There’s an idea we might want to think about. If we phase licences in, we might want to consider phasing them out as well.

I think it provides us with a great opportunity to prove we’re serious about road safety, traffic safety, and that we’re serious about listening to young people. Often, we tell young people that they have a place in the system, and when the time comes to prove it, we fall short. This is an opportunity, in a very practical way, to show Alex and to show those who have assisted Alex—David Medhurst and Fernando Costa—that the system is serious about dealing with young people’s issues in a serious way.

I also wanted to take a minute to thank the Minister of Transportation. She has met with Alex; she has listened to Alex. She is treating the issue very, very seriously, because I understand she challenged Alex and she asked Alex some pretty hard questions that he had to answer. You’d think that if the Minister of Transportation had not been listening, she would have just heard Alex out and said, “Thank you very much.” Instead, she actually asked him some very probing questions about his idea.

I also want to thank Steve Ball, legislative counsel, and my own office for their work in turning what was a great idea from Alex into what has become private member’s Bill 161. I think we can make some history here. We can get this off to a committee. We can help with the safety of people in the province of Ontario and prove to people like Alex that there’s a place for him in politics.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for this ballot item has expired. We’ll vote on Alex’s bill in about 50 minutes.

# OMBUDSMAN STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (DESIGNATED PUBLIC BODIES), 2011

## LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L’OMBUDSMAN (ORGANISMES PUBLICS DÉSIGNÉS)

Mr. Marchese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 183, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act and the Police Services Act with respect to investigating designated public bodies / *Projet de loi 183, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’ombudsman et la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui a trait aux enquêtes au sujet des organismes publics désignés.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Here’s what we want to do with this bill today: We want to expand the mandate of

the Ombudsman so that he can do more to protect Ontarians. That’s what the objective of Bill 183 is.

I want to thank the many people who came today, because they spent a whole day here. Some of them are facing me—most of them, actually, are facing me. I thought they were going to go there so that they could face you, but most of them are behind you. Some of them are there, and a few are here—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** And there. And over there, Rosie.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** —and some are over there. They spent the whole day here. This speaks to the incredible pain that many of them have experienced with one institution or another, whether it be children’s aid, a hospital, a long-term-care facility, a school board issue, or even a matter that’s related—and I don’t think many of those are here—to the independent police review director.

When you spend a whole day to come to a press conference in the morning, come to hear the question that we asked around 11 o’clock, and stick around until 3:30, 3:40—and we are on live—that speaks to the immense pain they experience and the desire they have to have the Ombudsman come in and shine a light on problems they believe, and I do too, in the various entities around which we spend billions of dollars and have no oversight over these bodies.

1540

The government might claim they have oversight in one form or another, but these people know there is no oversight. There is no independent oversight of these institutions, and that’s what we are calling for.

We are calling for an Ombudsman who has the investigative powers, the independence and the experience to investigate, identify problems, make recommendations to resolve them and then wait for the government to fix the problems. We have been waiting for a Premier who has the resolve and the strength to say, “If there are problems in these institutions, I want to know what they are, and then I’m going to fix them. And I’m going to send the Ombudsman in to do his review and wait for his resolutions.” But the government, each and every time, has refused to do that. I don’t understand why.

It can’t be for lack of money. When you look at every other province that has this power, you say to yourself, “How can Yukon do most of this?” Surely we’re a bit wealthier than Yukon—in the short term, until they discover more minerals, oil and gold. Who knows? Maybe they’ll get wealthier up there. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia: Most of these provinces have Ombudsman oversight over all these institutions that I mentioned, including, in many provinces, municipalities, including universities as well, which is part of my bill. If all the other provinces can do it, why is it that Ontario, so powerful in so many ways, still so relatively wealthy, can’t find the will to do it?

There is no downside. There is absolutely no downside. I understand that you as a government feel you would look bad, as you have every time the Ombudsman



has gone in, investigated something and forced you into a position to actually do something. But you can get ahead of the game. You can say, "I want the Ombudsman to go in, and I want him to bring back his recommendations, because I want to solve the problem." That's what you could do. Until you do that, of course you are going to be afraid of having the Ombudsman go into a hospital and reveal individual and/or systemic problems, because then you're going to look bad. Be bold. Be a leader from time to time, for God's sake. Do something.

*Interruption.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We're pleased to have you at Queen's Park today, but we have a very strict rule that you're allowed to watch the debate but not participate in it, and that includes clapping. Thank you. Rules are rules.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We spend billions of dollars. We spend \$17 billion to fund our hospitals—\$17 billion. We spend another \$7 billion or \$8 billion for universities; to be fair, that includes colleges too. And for our elementary school system, we spend \$16 billion as well. We spend billions on long-term-care facilities. And yet, we don't have any significant oversight over these areas. In health care, if there is substandard care and somebody dies—we had a deputant today whose father died, something that would have been resolved. You have individuals fighting it out on their own, trying to investigate a problem on their own. You've got people here who have suffered through children's aid societies fighting on their own to resolve an unjust problem that they feel should be legitimately dealt with by somebody who has the power to deal with it. Yet they, on their own, have to find the resources, the money, to hire lawyers to solve the problem because they can't go anywhere to get that problem solved.

The Ombudsman, Monsieur Marin, said, "Families can be broken apart needlessly, or children can be deprived of stable foster-care, or adoptions can fail, or at times, children can suffer ... abuse, or even die."

We have kids in our school system who are falling through the cracks. They need special education and they're not getting it. Those kids suffer on their own, and those families suffer on their own, because we don't have a government any longer that feels they have an obligation to take care of them all. Why? Because it costs money. It does cost money, but in the meantime we leave them on their own to fend for themselves.

We've got kids who are bullied, some of them sexually abused. I've heard of some of those cases, and you would think that the trustees would be there to help or that the principals would be there to help. In many cases they are there, and sometimes they fail those parents and they fail those kids. We need an Ombudsman.

Parents don't know where to turn. They're alone, and there are thousands of people who feel they're on their own when they've got a problem. They don't know where to turn. Some of us feel that they know where to go and they know who to turn to for help. Most of them don't know what to do or who to go to for help. The only

person they could go to is an Ombudsman. We'll hear from the Liberal very soon, because I'm sure he's got other suggestions. That's the only person they can go to, because if they go to the Liberal MPP, I don't know what they're going to get. I don't know what you're going to get.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Good service.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The member from London—Fanshawe says, "Good service." God bless. He'll be speaking shortly because he's a good soldier for the Liberal Party. He'll be speaking on this; I know it.

But when there is a problem, either in a hospital or a school, related to abuse or special ed, what the members will do is refer them back to somebody else. If it's a school issue, they'll say, "Go to the trustee or the principal." If it's a hospital issue, they might even write a letter—God bless—or they might say simply, "It's beyond us." I don't know. If it's related to university, they might say, "Go to"—I don't know where they would send you; I have no idea where they would send you. If it's a children's aid society, they will tell you that there is an association that—my goodness, what's the name of the organization that will deal with it? The minister made reference to it: the family services review board, which is supposed to have oversight. The Superior Court of Justice just made a decision stating that this family services review board does not have the power to hear certain CAS complaints and has so far been forced to put 50 hearings on ice. Going to your Liberal MPP: What is that going to get you? I don't know. I really don't.

We need to be able to go somewhere and feel that when we state our case, somebody will hear it. We need to validate the pain that people are experiencing, and we don't validate that pain by saying, "We're taking care of things. We have systems in place," because we don't. We do not have the systems in place, and I argue it's time to let the Ombudsman in. There is absolutely no downside. If other provinces in Canada, including the Yukon, can do it, so can Ontario. It's time.

The amount of money that people spend on their own, and the amount of money that organizations spend to defend themselves against the complaints that people have—if all that money got directed to help the Ombudsman, just a little, a few, few dollars, he could do this job, no problem. He has been doing an amazing job with the resources he's got now. With just a few of those lawyer fees that boards spend to defend themselves, and hospitals—with all those dollars they use to defend themselves, if all that money could just be funnelled, just a little bit, to the Ombudsman's office, we'd have no problem. He would have no problem doing his job. The time has come; we can't put this off.

1550

I suspect this bill is going to pass. I really do. It's going to go to committee, wherein it will die unless we push them, and unless we push the Premier, and say that if this bill passes today, we want them to deal with it in this session. We've got two or three weeks left. We're going to have to push the Premier to make sure that once



this bill is passed in the Legislature, they then deal with it in committee. That's what I ask those of you who have come to do, and then we'll push the Liberals to make sure that happens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm happy to speak to this private member's bill brought forward by the member for Trinity-Spadina.

First of all, let me say that this government supports and welcomes the work of the Ombudsman of Ontario. In fact, I had the privilege of representing our government on the all-party committee that recently renewed the Ombudsman's appointment for the next three years.

Why did our government appoint this particular Ombudsman in the first place? Why did we renew the appointment? Why did I, on behalf of our government, join my colleagues opposite in unanimously recommending the reappointment of the Ombudsman? That's because our government, and indeed, all members of this chamber, have an interest and recognize the value of transparency in government agencies and oversight of the work, the decision-making process and what goes on in these government agencies or government transfer partners.

This bill would give the Ombudsman a jurisdiction that he does not already have, in the areas of the MUSH sector—universities and colleges, hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, retirement homes—and an oversight role over the role of the independent police review director.

I've said that our government recognizes the value of oversight and transparency, and it's precisely that, because in each of those sectors in the MUSH sector that I've just outlined, there are already very stringent, very thoughtful, very careful mechanisms to oversee what is going on in those transfer agencies, boards and commissions and so on. The reason that we've already set up those mechanisms to oversee those sectors of the MUSH sector is because we want to ensure, as I've said before and say now for the third time, transparency and oversight.

In particular, in the hospital sector, we have something where the LHINs interact with the hospitals and through the hospital service accountability agreements. In child welfare services, we already have Family Court oversight of all child protection matters. A CAS ombudsman has oversight over the Child and Family Services Review Board. With respect to the Office of the Chief Coroner, it now has the authority to review the deaths of children who are in the care of the CAS. With respect to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, that's an independent body that already has substantial authority and powers to deal with complaints about police officers, police services boards and so forth.

The issue here is, is there already oversight to ensure transparency and oversight of those sectors in the MUSH sector that this private member's bill now wants to bring the Ombudsman into? The clear answer is yes. When you

examine every one of those areas in the MUSH sector, be it the hospitals, the CAS, long-term care, the independent police review agency, the various school boards, if you examine how those MUSH sectors are overseen by an agency to ensure that there is transparency, there are already built-in mechanisms to ensure that.

The difficulty here is, if this private member's bill were to go forward, that we create another layer upon an already existing layer of oversight. The way this private member's bill would read, we would have the Ombudsman as an overseer of an overseer. So now we have an overseer overseeing an overseer who's overseeing the sectors in the MUSH sector.

At some point, the bureaucratic overload here becomes so much, becomes so dense, becomes so unfathomable and so unworkable that the very intent of this member's private member's bill, to ensure there is transparency and oversight, starts to choke on itself. So there is a certain benefit to clarity—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. I can barely hear the honourable member, and I've got a speaker right in my ear.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We can hear it. We don't like it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Listen, it's Thursday afternoon. I know people have had a long week, but the honourable member does have the floor, and please respect that.

Member for Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** With all due respect to my friend opposite, what his private member's bill is going to do is make the system even more complicated. Let's keep it clear. Let's keep it tight. That's why we've set up those agencies to oversee those parts of the MUSH sector that the member's private member's bill is designed to cover.

I say that as someone who's a member of a government that supports the role of the Ombudsman. I personally sat on an all-party committee that renewed the appointment of the current sitting Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has his role. Those other agencies of oversight with respect to hospitals, schools, children's aid societies and police have their role. They do a competent role. They are careful about their role. They're responsible about the role. They ensure transparency and oversight.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm happy to stand today and support this bill. I'd love to see this bill get to committee after the support of the House today because I think there are some very good points in this bill, particularly around the fact that other jurisdictions in our country have the same type of legislation. I believe Yukon, BC etc. are all jurisdictions that have similar legislation.

But there's two things in my mind that make me believe we need this bill and why it's so important to have this bill. One is the Ombudsman's report. I compliment the Ombudsman's report on the G20. He came out with a report that said, "Caught in the Act." Thank God he did, because he actually identified the problem. Why



there was such a problem with the G20 was that we had a secret bill that was passed. The general public didn't know, the police hardly knew, and as a result of that, we had disturbances that were unnecessary here in the city of Toronto as a result of the G20. So I compliment the Ombudsman on that report, because we need to see more of that oversight. The government would never have come out with any kind of a report on that. Finally, they let Mr. McMurtry come out and he gave a similar report. The guilty people on the G20 were this government over here and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Second of all, why do we need it for something like the MUSH sector and, in particular, hospitals? We don't have to look any further than some of the money that was spent on the Deputy Minister of Health who was let go by this government or resigned from this government in 2009, and yet in the 2010 sunshine list ends up getting, I believe, something like \$600,000 or \$700,000 from a hospital over in Hamilton. That's my understanding. He was on the payroll over there somehow. We still don't know whether that was severance. We don't know whether he was paid some kind of secretive salary. But the reality is, that's \$700,000 in taxpayer dollars in the province of Ontario, and we in the opposition can't find out where that money went, how he was paid and under what agreement he was paid. That alone would tell me that we need some kind of oversight of that kind of spending right here in the province of Ontario, and automatically, the person to look at it, in my opinion, is the Ombudsman. I think that office has done a fairly good job of trying to keep an eye on these guys.

1600

We don't know what kinds of secret deals these guys are pulling off all the time. Almost every day we find something. I'd love to know what happened to the Samsung deal. We don't know that. We can't find anything on an \$8-billion deal—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Seven billion.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** —a \$7-billion investment. We don't know any of the details of that deal.

I applaud the member for bringing it forward. I hope all the members of the House will pass this and let it go to second reading. I do think they'll try to kill it, that's for sure, but in the end, I congratulate you for bringing the bill forward, and I will be supporting it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I stand in support of this bill, and I stand in support of the Ombudsman. In my nearly 10 years in this House, I have seen the Ombudsman do remarkable service to the people of this province. When a government was trying to hide all the problems with MPAC—remember all the people who had their property assessments and couldn't get any satisfaction from the government? It was the Ombudsman who came in, investigated the complaints and found out that things were absolutely wrong. It was the Ombudsman who made the 12 or 15 recommendations which the government eventu-

ally had to say were right. The government wasn't listening to the opposition, the government wasn't listening to the people, but the government had to listen to the Ombudsman.

And when there were all the problems with people having to give their disabled children up to children's aid in order that they could get services, it was the Ombudsman who investigated that, who chastised the government and who made it right, so that parents no longer had to live in fear of having their children cut off from the very services that they needed, having to give them up for adoption or to the children's aid society and not look after them themselves.

It was the Ombudsman who did this, and the Ombudsman has done this service for us countless times in jurisdiction after jurisdiction over which the Ombudsman had control. This bill says that that good service, that service to the people of Ontario, to the people who have no other recourse—save and except the courts, which are expensive; save and except their MPP, who often does not have the resources or the wherewithal to individually look at it—that they need an Ombudsman. They need someone to go to.

I'm saying to my friend from Trinity-Spadina that he's right, and I'm saying to my friend from Willowdale that you're not right when you say that there are other bodies who can look at these things, because no other body in the entire province has had the same force and effect as the Ombudsman, save and except, perhaps, the auditor. Those are the two people whom the government fears—not just this government, but the government before them, which was Conservative; and not just Conservatives, but the government before them, which was NDP—because those two institutions can look at things that no one else can and can make reports that no one else can make.

So to stand up, as my learned friend from Willowdale did, and say that there are other institutions and it's bureaucracy upon bureaucracy is simply not correct. It is something that I think was beneath his usual capable level of debate in this place. We all know that there are little tiny boards with minuscule powers who can investigate, maybe, over many years and come to no conclusions—we all know that. But there are only two groups that have the kind of force and effect that the people of this province need.

The Premier often says, "Let the sunshine in." That's all this is going to do: let the sunshine in, and I for one, being a member of this Legislature, want it to shine in. I want it to shine in if it embarrasses the government side, the opposition side, the bureaucratic side, the many-boards-and-committees side of government. I want it to shine in because we have an obligation, to each and every person who sent us here as electors, to speak on their behalf and to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. That's what government is all about.

My friend from Trinity-Spadina says that his bill will allow the Ombudsman into Ontario's hospitals, long-term-care facilities, retirement homes, school boards and



children's aid societies, and that he alone—the Ombudsman—has the investigative powers, the resources, the independence and the experience to resolve complaints and fix problems. On that, he is absolutely right.

I just want to talk about some of these institutions. First are hospitals. Hospitals need an independent, effective oversight mechanism to deal with individual and systemic issues in health care. Every single person in this room has been in and has used a hospital—probably all of us—in the last year or two. We go there when we break our arms; we go there when we fall down; we go there when something goes wrong with our health; we go there when we simply need something investigated that is beyond the scope of our local health care practitioner. Yet we have no Ombudsman if something goes wrong. Some of the hospitals have individual ombudspeople, but they cannot investigate and probably will not investigate beyond the scope that is given to them by the local board.

Ontario is the only province that does not let the Ombudsman have a look at this. I have to wonder why. If every other province said that this is necessary; if every other province is not afraid of the Ombudsman looking, why are we? Why do we have members who stand up and say, “This is bureaucracy upon bureaucracy upon bureaucracy”? No, it's not. If someone feels aggrieved and that something has been done wrong to them, they have a place to go if it's not resolved within the hospital itself.

This is going to open it up to people who often don't have an opportunity to talk for themselves. In terms of students at school for school boards—there are some brave school board trustees and school boards across this province that want the Ombudsman to investigate themselves. I'm speaking here particularly about the Blue-water school board. For those who might be watching on television, that's the area around Sarnia. They have voted in support of Bill 183. They did so, I think, just a day or two ago.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** May 3.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** May 3; a couple of days ago, they voted in favour of Bill 183. They said, “Please, investigate if we are doing something wrong. Our children are too precious. The parents who want the best for their children need the Ombudsman to take a look.”

Children's aid societies: I used to be a member of the Toronto children's aid society. I was council's representative during the time of the Metropolitan Toronto council, when I was the mayor for some five years and a few years after that when the megacity of Toronto came about. I know that this is a difficult job. I know the workers have a difficult job. I know that the board tries its very best, but there are failures and failings of even the people who try their very best. There are failures and failings. They need to be able to be policed, to be looked at. They need to have a body that can say, “These procedures that you have adopted are not the right procedures.” They have to have that. I am not afraid of the Ombudsman going and looking there, even though I used to be a board member. I welcome it, and so do hundreds

and thousands of people who have been dealt with by children's aid societies across this province, either as parents or children themselves or people having to give their children up for adoption or who've had them taken away from them. They need someone to stand up and look to see whether justice has been done.

Long-term-care facilities: We have an aging population. We have tens of thousands or maybe 100,000 people who live in these long-term-care facilities. If they don't live there now, they soon will. Our population is aging very quickly, and they virtually have no one to speak for them save and except their families—and sadly, so sadly, many of the families after a time don't come back.

**1610**

I know when my own mother-in-law was in a long-term-care facility, I would go to see her once or twice every week—it was close to my home—so that she would have company and someone she knew. When I sat down amongst the other people who were there, they hadn't had a visitor, some of them, in weeks or months—some of them, sadly, even in years.

If they don't have someone to stand up for them—and all they had was the staff—if they don't have someone who can come in and say, “The facilities here are wrong and there need to be some improvements,” like an ombudsman, then they are going to continue to sit there in their soiled diapers, without a bath, without all of the necessary food, living and watching television that they don't understand without any activities. It's only an ombudsman who can help them.

Certainly, a group like the Royal Canadian Legion, of which I am proud to be a member, is on board on this. They think the Ombudsman should be involved because so many of their members, so many of those brave men and women who fought for us in the Second World War and in Korea, are now in that circumstance. They know they need an ombudsman.

I want to leave a little bit of time left for my friend who introduced the motion, but I want to say to the members opposite: Do not be afraid. Vote for this motion. Stand up. I mean, there's only three or four weeks left, but stand up today and say that you're not afraid of it. Let's make this an issue in the next election. Let's talk about giving the Ombudsman extra authority from all parties. Let's talk about this so that we do a service to the people of this province and so that we make sure that there is someone to whom every citizen in this wonderful province can go in time of need: someone who can stand up, someone who can speak on behalf of everyone, and when governments or institutions or agencies don't do it right, they will; they can be, they will be, remedied. I ask all members to support the bill from the member from Trinity-Spadina.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to enter the debate on Bill 131. First, I want to welcome all the people who came from across Toronto and the province since this



morning to be at the press conference and listen to the debate in this House. There's no doubt in my mind that every one of you has a different story about a loved one or certain circumstances you've faced in your life, and you've faced difficulties.

I want to say at the beginning, before I start talking about our position—or my position, at least—it's not about the Ombudsman. All of us in this House supported the Ombudsman's role in the province of Ontario. I don't want to create the perception that the opposition is supporting the Ombudsman and we, as a government, are anti-Ombudsman.

We are the majority of this House. We could say "no" to a reappointment of the Ombudsman in the province of Ontario. Not a long time ago, collectively in this House, we stood together to reappoint the Ombudsman, to oversee the conduct of many different elements of our society because we believe strongly in accountability and transparency in the province of Ontario.

I have great respect for the member from Trinity-Spadina. He and I spoke yesterday. We talked about many different things—how sometimes his party and our party are close on many different issues to support the vulnerable people among us. Our ability to support vulnerable people still exists. Whether as a government or whether as an opposition party, all of us come from different regions, from different ridings, and we carry a lot of concerns from many different constituents, whether they're children's aid societies, school boards; whether it's police brutality, hospital corruption or whatever the issue might be. But the whole issue is that it's very important for all of us to put accountability and transparency on our agenda and focus on it.

I want to say to the member opposite, I know he spoke about the role of the Ombudsman. We puffed up the Ombudsman; we created him as a messiah who's going to fix everything for all of us in the province of Ontario. I don't understand that. He is doing an excellent job, what he does on a daily basis, but there is also another role for other people. The member talked about school boards. For goodness' sake, we elect trustees, elected by the people of Ontario. They're elected to support their constituents, to voice their concern at the school board, to look after their children, their kids, their schools and everything for the province of Ontario. So why would I take the role? Why do we have to destroy a democratic process and replace it with one person because we like that person? We have to have a system and we have to respect that system.

We have a board elected by the people of Ontario to oversee the conduct of the hospital. We have a LHIN to voice the concern of the people. We have an Auditor General, who has the right to go to a school board, who has the right to go to the hospital, who has the right to investigate everything.

I attended a committee one time here at Queen's Park when the Auditor General brought most of the school board CEOs or chairs and asked them about their credit cards and investigated all their conduct. It's very import-

ant for us to have agencies and organizations, on a regular basis, investigate many different aspects of our society.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** When they spoke, I listened, and I think they don't want to hear the truth. They brought people from across the province, which I respect and honour. I know lots of people went to the Ombudsman in my riding of London-Fanshawe. They were disappointed. They couldn't do anything for them, even the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman has a role. In the end, he is a person who has a certain capacity. As a province of 13 million people, we have to delegate this capacity and this role to make sure every element of this province works according to rules and regulations because, in the end, we are responsible for the people of Ontario who elect us to be here.

Because we love someone, now we come, gathering the people, and we tell them, "Yes, the guy is going to be your saviour. This guy's going to be your messiah who's going to fix all your problems in life." That's not correct. It's not fair.

We have a lot of good working people at the Auditor General's office. We have organizations like the Child and Family Services Review Board that oversee the conduct of the children's aid societies and many others. That's why we are talking about—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to rise and speak to this bill. I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for bringing it forward. I want to make it very, very clear that not only will I be voting in support of this bill, but it is also strongly supported by the PC caucus.

It's the kind of speeches that we've heard today from the member from Willowdale that give people reason for being cynical about politics and about government as a whole. What we have here is a bill that is simply saying that we want to expand the mandate of the Ombudsman to look into matters of concern in areas that touch the lives of so many people in this province that are now closed to the Ombudsman.

I don't like the fact that we have to be debating this bill at all, because in fact the real ombudsmen should be the members of cabinet—the cabinet ministers who are elected by people in this province to oversee government. But instead of being ombudsmen for the people who elected them, they become defenders of a bureaucracy gone wrong. The real ombudsmen should be the members of this Legislature, but the fact of the matter is, the members of this Legislature are cut off at the knees when they attempt to look into many of the issues that are going wrong, whether it be long-term-care facilities, whether it be a school board, whether it be a hospital or whether it be children's aid.

We, as members of the Legislature, are now forced to say that we need an officer of the Legislature to do the job that we are actually elected to do because of the



barriers that have been built up over time that actually keep us from doing the job and getting to the answers we need.

I want to speak specifically to two areas. One is the school boards. We have trustees elected to actually represent the people and students in this province on matters of education, but the reality is that most trustees have been neutered in terms of their ability to actually do the job because the directors of education in this province, to a large degree—the administration is dictating to trustees what the policies will be. There are very few trustees who actually can exercise and have the authority to do so, because over time their authority has been eroded. What we need is someone to be able to go and do the job of the trustees, because they're refusing to do it.

1620

I want to give you an example. With us in the House today, and I welcome her, is Lesa McDougall. She has had a serious challenge with the school board because of their inability or unwillingness to address a very serious issue that has to do with busing. She took her issue to the trustees and expected that the trustees would actually represent the parents and represent this issue. Here, unfortunately, is her experience, as related when she went to see the school boards: "School boards lack accountability, and the issue of student transportation procurement clearly demonstrates the disconnect between what the ministry says ought to happen and what in reality happens at the local" school board.

Here is what she said when she sat down with her school board: "I sat in a negotiations meeting with a superintendent of business who (when asked what the trustees thought about the whole RFP process as rolled out by the ministry) responded, 'It doesn't matter,' and then asked the Catholic board's superintendent of business, 'Do they know?' And again, 'Well, it wouldn't matter. We're going ahead with this'" anyway.

This is just one example. I had that example in York region, where parents were attempting to meet with trustees and they were told by the director of education that they should not and cannot meet with parents in private to discuss matters of education. It wasn't until I raised it in this House that this was actually then brought to the attention of that school board, and very quickly, things changed. But I can tell you this: Whether it's bullying or whether it is other issues, very few school board trustees are empowered to do what they were elected to do, and so we need an Ombudsman.

Another example is the children's aid society. In 1998, this House passed a piece of legislation called the Social Work and Social Service Work Act. The whole purpose of that legislation was to ensure that there are standards across this province for social workers and social service workers. It was to establish a college that would register social service workers and social workers so that there would be a disciplinary panel so that people could be held to a standard of accountability. What has happened over time? This same government has actually found a way to circumvent that legislation that was intended to

protect the public interest. Why? Because now, children's aid societies are calling those social workers "child protection workers." Do you know what that does? It ensures that every social worker working for a children's aid society is now not required to register as a social worker and therefore is not subject to those standards or to the disciplinary process. It is the government that has actually facilitated that circumvention, and so we have things going on in children's aid societies over which we have no control. It's going to take nothing short of an ombudsman going into those agencies and ensuring that the appropriate research is done and that these things are exposed.

I know what's happening because I was a cabinet minister too. I know the discussions that took place, and I'm sure they took place in the NDP when they were the government. This government, our government, here's what happens: What happens is, we don't want the Ombudsman to have access to all of these things because it may well embarrass us. It's actually cumbersome. We don't want those additional eyes and we don't want that sun to shine in. I say that we need that disclosure and that transparency. Our government, unfortunately, governments of all stripes, have come to the point where, rather than being willing to look at what the problem is and dealing with it, we circle the wagons and we ensure that we protect our bureaucracy, we ensure that we protect those agencies. Rather than saying, "Let's get it right; let's listen to the people who are affected by the social service, the public service, the educational services, our hospitals; let's listen and hear what is wrong with that administration and fix it," what we do is we circle the wagons and we defend it.

In the meantime, innocent people continue to be hurt; people who cannot speak for themselves are left unprotected, and the whole purpose of this act and the reason that we're supporting it is because we believe it's gone on far too long. People need to know that someone can move into these agencies, into these organizations—be it long-term care, be it a hospital, be it a school board—and ensure that the public interest is protected.

Again, I thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for bringing this forward. It will be interesting to see what the position of government members will be in this matter.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to thank the Conservative members who spoke, and thank the member from Newmarket-Aurora for saying that the entire Conservative caucus is behind this bill. We appreciate that.

I was a bit disappointed with the member from Willowdale, I have to admit, particularly because he's a lawyer and ought to know better. If there was oversight already, these people wouldn't be here. They've been suffering a problem or another for years.

School boards do not have independent oversight. The trustees are sometimes the problemo. The principals are



sometimes the problem, or a superintendent. We need independent oversight. There is none.

In the hospitals, they must inform patients when errors occur and they must report critical patient safety measures—that's it. There is no oversight of hospitals.

So to hear the member from Willowdale say that we have enough measures in place is wrong and it's insulting.

When we talk about long-term-care facilities, we thought a revolution was coming with the former member from Toronto—

**Interjections:** Smitherman.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mr. Smitherman.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Toronto Centre.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Toronto Centre. The revolution just never came. The Canadian Press reported that three quarters of the province's long-term-care facilities did not meet provincial standards of care. They said that in 2008. Standards of care are not unreasonable: two baths per week, regular changing of diapers—that's it.

Who is minding the store there? There is no oversight. There can be no duplication if there is no oversight to begin with. Do you understand that?

So it saddens me that the member from Willowdale stands up and says that this is going to be duplication. I believe he's speaking for the government, because most of you get notes from your ministries. So I believe he's speaking for most of you. That is sad, sad, sad, sad.

Here's what I feel: You're going to send it to a legislative committee—I know that, but based on what I heard from the member from Willowdale, who's the spokesperson for the government, it's going to be killed in committee. That's why I urge those of you who are here, you've got to remind your provincial members, particularly if they're Liberal, that they've got to do the right thing. They can't just pass it today; once we send it to committee, it's got to be dealt with in this session.

Thank you for coming.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has now expired. It's time to vote.

#### GREAT LAKES SHORELINE RIGHT OF PASSAGE ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE DROIT DE PASSAGE SUR LE LITTORAL DES GRANDS LACS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll first deal with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. Craitor.

Mr. Craitor has moved second reading of Bill 32, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Craitor?

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed? So ordered.

#### NOVICE DRIVER "P" PLATE ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 EXIGEANT UNE PLAQUE «P» POUR LES CONDUCTEURS DÉBUTANTS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 8.

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 161, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require vehicles driven by novice drivers to display markers or identifying devices. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Flynn?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I would move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed? So ordered.

#### OMBUDSMAN STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (DESIGNATED PUBLIC BODIES), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'OMBUDSMAN (ORGANISMES PUBLICS DÉSIGNÉS)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 9.

Mr. Marchese has moved second reading of Bill 183, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act and the Police Services Act with respect to investigating designated public bodies. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1631 to 1636.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Craitor, Kim  
DiNovo, Cheri

Hardeman, Ernie  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario

Miller, Paul  
Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Dhillon, Vic  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Jaczek, Helena  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Mangat, Amrit  
Moridi, Reza  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Qaadri, Shafiq

Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sousa, Charles

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 11; the nays are 22.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negatived.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1638.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East-Cooksville / Mississauga-Est-Cooksville	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Phil McNeely  
Yasir Naqvi, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek  
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark  
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones  
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craiton  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day











*Continued from back cover*

## **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....5737

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Renewable energy**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....5737

### **Accessible Media Inc.**

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....5738

### **Standing Committee on Estimates**

Mr. John Yakabuski .....5738

### **Midwifery**

Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....5738

### **Matthews House Hospice**

Mr. Jim Wilson .....5738

### **Don Valley Art Club**

Mr. Michael Prue .....5739

### **Toronto East General Hospital**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....5739

### **Hasan Savehilaghi**

Mr. Khalil Ramal .....5739

### **Anniversary of Polish constitution**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....5739

## **REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

### **Standing Committee on General Government**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....5740

Report adopted .....5740

### **Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs**

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....5740

Report adopted .....5741

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **Anatolian Heritage Day Act, 2011, Bill 192, Mr. Ruprecht / Loi de 2011 sur le Jour du patrimoine anatolien, projet de loi 192, M. Ruprecht**

First reading agreed to.....5741

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....5741

## **STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

### **Poverty / Pauvreté**

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....5741

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....5742

Mr. Michael Prue .....5742

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Replacement workers**

Mme France Gélinas .....5743

### **Home care**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....5743

### **Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

Mr. Frank Klees .....5743

### **Cemeteries**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....5744

### **Office of the Ombudsman**

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....5744

### **Child custody**

Mr. Kim Craitor .....5744

### **Hospital services**

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....5744

### **Assistance to farmers**

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....5745

### **Ontario drug benefit program**

Mr. Khalil Ramal .....5745

### **Identity theft**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....5745

### **Ontario drug benefit program**

Mr. Khalil Ramal .....5746

### **Correction of record**

Mr. Michael Prue .....5746

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act, 2011, Bill 32, Mr. Craitor / Loi de 2011 sur le droit de passage sur le littoral des Grands Lacs, projet de loi 32, M. Craitor**

Mr. Kim Craitor .....5746

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....5747

Mr. Michael Prue .....5749

Mr. Khalil Ramal .....5751

Mr. Kim Craitor .....5751



**Novice Driver “P” Plate Act, 2011 / Loi de 2011  
exigeant une plaque «P» pour les conducteurs  
débutants**

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5753
Mr. Frank Klees.....	5754
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	5756
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5758
Mr. Wayne Arthurs.....	5758
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	5759
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5759

**Ombudsman Statute Law Amendment Act  
(Designated Public Bodies), 2011, Bill 183,  
Mr. Marchese / Loi de 2011 modifiant des lois en ce  
qui a trait à l’ombudsman (organismes publics  
désignés), projet de loi 183, M. Marchese**

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5760
Mr. David Zimmer.....	5762
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5762
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5763
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5764
Mr. Frank Klees.....	5765
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5766

**Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act, 2010,  
Bill 32, Mr. Craitor / Loi de 2010 sur le droit de  
passage sur le littoral des Grands Lacs, projet de  
loi 32, M. Craitor**

Second reading agreed to.....	5767
-------------------------------	------

**Novice Driver “P” Plate Act, 2011 / Loi de 2011  
exigeant une plaque «P» pour les conducteurs  
débutants**

Second reading agreed to.....	5767
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**Ombudsman Statute Law Amendment Act  
(Designated Public Bodies), 2011, Bill 183,  
Mr. Marchese / Loi de 2011 modifiant des lois en ce  
qui a trait à l’ombudsman (organismes publics  
désignés), projet de loi 183, M. Marchese**

Second reading negated.....	5768
-----------------------------	------

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 5 May 2011 / Jeudi 5 mai 2011

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011, Bill 179, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 favorisant la fondation de familles et la réussite chez les jeunes, projet de loi 179, Mme Broten</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5717
Mr. Dave Levac .....	5718
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5719
Mme France Gélinas .....	5719
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5719
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5719
Second reading vote deferred .....	5720
<b>Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011, Bill 186, Ms. Aggelonitis / Loi de 2011 appuyant la stratégie Ontario sans fumée par la réduction du tabac de contrebande, projet de loi 186, Mme Aggelonitis</b>	
Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5720
Hon. Margaret R. Best .....	5722
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5726

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5726
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5726
Mr. Kim Craitor .....	5726
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5726
Mr. Greg Sorbara .....	5726
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	5726
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5726

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Ontario public service</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5726
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5726
<b>Ontario public service</b>	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5727
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5727
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5728
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5728
<b>Smart meters</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5729
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5729

## Ontario public service

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5730
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5730

## Office of the Ombudsman

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5731
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5731

## Public transit

Mr. Kuldip Kular .....	5731
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5731

## Health care

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5732
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5732

## Financement des collèges / College funding

Mme France Gélinas .....	5732
L'hon. John Milloy .....	5733

## Midwifery

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5733
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5733

## Wind turbines

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5734
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5734

## Health care

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5734
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5734

## Water quality

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5735
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5735

## Wind turbines

Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	5735
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5735

## Soldiers' remains

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5736
Hon. Michael Chan .....	5736

## Children's mental health services

Mr. Dave Levac .....	5736
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5737

## DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

<b>Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011, Bill 179, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 favorisant la fondation de familles et la réussite chez les jeunes, projet de loi 179, Mme Broten</b>	
Second reading agreed to .....	5737

*Continued on inside back cover*





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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 9 May 2011

Lundi 9 mai 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 May 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 mai 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park: Rejean Picard, chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance; Andrew Kuyvenhoven, chair of Flowers Canada, Ontario; and Don Taylor, chair of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, who are here in the gallery with us today.

After question period, they will be hosting a lunch in room 228, and I hope the members will take the opportunity to meet with them and learn more about the state of their industry. I'd like to welcome them all to Queen's Park today.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I think the member from Oxford beat me to it, but I also want to add my welcome to Don Taylor, Rejean Picard and Andrew Kuyvenhoven.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'd like to welcome my sister, Susan, and her husband, my brother-in-law, Roy Houghton, who are here to watch democracy in action. Welcome, Susan and Roy.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to welcome a constituent of mine from London North Centre, Melissa Kargiannakis. Melissa sang O Canada at the vote mob in London and inspired everyone who was there.

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I'd like to wish a happy birthday to Donna Downing, who was supposed to be here with me today. It's her birthday, and I just wanted to wish her all the best.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted today to have most of my family here with me: My mom, Martha Smith, from the great riding of Nipissing, is here; my brother, Joe Deschenes Smith; my niece, Kate Smith; my nephew, Michael Smith; and my brother, Paul Smith, from New York City. We're delighted to have them all here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further introductions? The member from Nepean—Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I do notice in the gallery that one of our former colleagues, Bart Maves—I guess I just beat you to the

punch—is here from the great region of Niagara. It's great to see him here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I too want to take this opportunity to welcome Bart Maves, who represented Niagara Falls in the 36th and 37th Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park today, Bart.

On behalf of Christine Moreland, one of our information officers, seated in the Speaker's gallery today are her mother, Susan McAllister, and her grandparents, Bob and Ann Bennett. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of the member from Hamilton Centre and page Lukian Husak, I'd like to welcome his mother, Danusia Burdyk-Husak; his father, Ihor Husak; and brother Zakhar Husak. They're visiting Queen's Park's today as Lukian serves as page captain. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a parliamentary delegation from the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, led by His Excellency Rana Muhammad Iqbal Khan. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The Ontario PCs believe that government should actually work for the people who pay the bills. The McGuinty Liberal approach seems to be for people to work longer and harder and pay more and more for more expensive government. Not only that, but you keep deals that you sign secret from the general public, who are the actual employers who have to pay the bills.

The minister's secret deal of a 1% increase is supposed to kick in after the next election. This was exposed by another union trying to find the same secret deal. Finance Minister, can you confirm that no other unions have a similar increase after the next election campaign?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The only thing secret around here is what the Tories will do if they come to office. They were going to get rid of the Human Rights Tribunal, and now they tell us that they're going to keep it. Whatever happened to the original deal? Those are what the secrets are around here. The Leader of the Opposition says he's going to get rid of arbitration, but he doesn't say what he'll replace it with. He fails to acknowledge

the fact that when he was in government they supposedly fixed the arbitration challenge.

Then the Leader of the Opposition referred to the great city of Toronto as mediocre last week, and we completely reject that. The only secret is, where would you come up with that? We think this is a great metropolis with a bright future and with a lot of promise in a whole range of areas that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, obviously the minister doesn't want to talk about his secret deal that he signed with the largest public sector union that deals with the province. Ontario families were told that you were doing something about runaway spending, and now we find out you're signing secret deals to pay out after the next provincial election campaign. Minister, that was for 38,000 provincial workers. There are more than a million workers in the broader public sector. They're already lining up the same secret deal that you gave to OPSEU.

Minister, how much money have you set aside? Exactly how much will this cost when you spread it across the broader public sector?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Actually, that so-called deal saved the taxpayers \$137 million. That compares to another era with another government that that member was a part of, where we saw strikes and repeated loss in our school systems and in our public sector that amounted to enormous costs. So indeed, we got a four-year deal with OPSEU. There was a signed letter to the collective agreement, which is quite common, and it saved \$137 million. We stand by that deal. It's a good deal for taxpayers, and we'll continue to work with all of our partners in the public and broader public sectors to lower the costs of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I don't think anybody is buying that. If it was such a good deal, you'd make it public. You wouldn't try to bury it. You wouldn't pay government lawyers to keep it under wraps. You tried to bury this deal, Minister, because you wanted to keep it secret. It was a payoff to win votes after the next election campaign—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I withdraw.

Here is the problem: This is clearly evidence of a government that has lost its way and that is beyond its best-before date, and that's why, with these secret deals, people want to see change in the province of Ontario. They want to see it change to a PC government that will respect the taxpayer who pays the bills.

Minister, how are you going to pay for it? Just be direct. Are you going to increase the HST by one point or two?

1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, the only secret deal around here is what they're going to do if they come to

office. They've said they're going to cut \$3 billion from health care. We think that's wrong. They said they're going to get rid of the Human Rights Tribunal; now they say they're going to keep it. The secret deal between the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Lanark apparently is no longer a deal, although we suspect he'll still proceed down there. What the people of Ontario want is a government that has laid out a plan, that's getting us back to balance.

By the way, I hope the Leader of the Opposition saw the job numbers last week. We've got more jobs today than we did when we went into the recession. It's because a government with a good plan for a better future is governing this province, and on October 7—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Member from Oxford.

New question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier, who continues to not rule out that he's going to increase the HST to pay for his runaway spending: The problem is that Premier McGuinty continues to make secret back-room deals and then go back to the taxpayer to pay the bills after the next general election. We've got the secret deal with OPSEU, the largest public sector union in the province. I suspect he has other secret deals that he's trying to keep hidden that hopefully will find the light of day.

You made a secret deal with Samsung for some \$7 billion that is driving up hydro rates in our province. You made a secret deal with the former deputy minister, who resigned after the eHealth scandal.

Minister, why don't you get it? What's with this secrecy? Why do you bury all these expenses and try to hide them until after the election campaign?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's no secret that we're creating tens of thousands of jobs in the green energy sector. It's no secret that we have cut wait times for a variety of services. It's no secret that we're proceeding with full-day learning because that's in the best interest of our children. It's no secret that our environment is cleaner. We've created a greenbelt around this great centre, and this province is growing. It's no secret that this government is on track to get back to balance in spite of the worst downturn since the Great Depression.

The only secret is what they're going to cut. What hospitals will they close? What nurses will they lay off? What teachers will they lay off? We reject that approach. We're taking a strong, balanced approach, an open approach that creates jobs and builds a better economy for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew, your seatmate and the leader of your party is



trying to ask a question and your interjections are interrupting your leader.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier: Come on. You tried to bury this deal. You say "an open approach"? You paid government lawyers to bury your secret deal.

We all know that the McGuinty Liberals will increase the HST after the next election campaign. You're going to have to do that to pay for all your runaway promises and your secret deals. You're going to drive up hydro rates with your secret sweetheart deal with multinational corporation Samsung, and we also know, Speaker, that they signed a secret deal on the Oakville power plant that could cost up to a billion dollars to Ontario families on their hydro bills.

I will ask the minister—just tell us: Is it a one-point increase in the HST, or are you really planning a two-point increase in the HST?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd refer the leader to the budget, which lays out a three-year plan that's cutting taxes for all Ontarians, cutting personal taxes. I welcome the support of his federal counterparts, Mr. Flaherty particularly, and a range of other federal Conservatives who have helped us put together the largest tax cut plan in the history of Ontario.

The Leader of the Opposition forgets about a few things that he kept quiet. Let's talk about the hydro agencies. Let's talk about the hidden salaries. Let's talk about lack of access to freedom of information and privacy, and a range of other things.

It's no secret: This government has built a better education system; it has built a better health care system; we have provided risk management for our farmers; we're building a better future for all Ontarians. That's no secret and we'll take that record to the people on October 7—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Here's something that is no secret: Minister, nobody believes you anymore, and they want to see change in the province of Ontario.

Samsung—secret deal; the Oakville power plant—secret deal; the G20—secret law; OPSEU—and I know there are probably many more secret deals that we are going to bring to the light of day and stand up for the Ontario taxpayers who get stuck with the bills.

Minister, you don't understand that families are struggling to make ends meet. Many families have seen their own wages rolled back. Sadly, far too many have lost jobs altogether in the McGuinty Liberal Ontario—300,000 in manufacturing alone. They cannot continue to pay more.

Why is your answer to increase taxes once again on Ontario families when a better approach is to end the secret deals in the first place—end them right here today?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** He ought to be the Leader of the Opposition in fantasyland.

The fact of the matter is, we've invested in health care and education. We're creating full-day learning right

across the province. We have hired nurses. We have hired doctors. We have reduced wait times for key hospital procedures. We have applied a greater degree of accountability and openness than any government in the history of this province.

The people of Ontario can see through the phony rhetoric, and they will put our plan up against their lack of plan any day. It is about building a better economy with better schools, better hospitals and a better future for all our children.

That's what this government's about. That's what we've done till now, and I look forward to having that privilege again the day after October 7.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** To the Acting Premier: A core principle of Ontario's freedom-of-information act states, "Decisions on the disclosure of government information should be reviewed independently of government." Does the Acting Premier agree with that principle?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think all members of the Legislature stand behind the laws that we pass. Inevitably, there are twists and turns on the road that cause us to make decisions and do things, but we do agree with that principle.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** We've got a good track record.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, we've got a good track record. I had the great privilege of applying freedom-of-information legislation to the hydro agencies some four or five years ago. That used to be covered up. We also had the opportunity to expand accountability on ministerial expenses and a range of other issues.

I'm proud of this government's track record on accountability, and I look forward to the member's supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate that answer.

We've obtained a series of emails between political staff at the Ministry of Finance concerning freedom-of-information requests. The emails note that the request has come from an "opposition party." Why does the ministry need to know where the request came from before deciding on how they will respond to it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We routinely, once a decision has been made, are advised about information being released. I suspect, without having those particular emails in front of me, that that's the case here, and I'll look forward to having the chance to read those.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** In these emails, we see that some requests are labelled "contentious." Can the Acting Premier explain why an FOI request would be labelled "contentious"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Probably because it is.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Brief but unilluminating.

In one email, a senior political staffer to this minister directed the FOI officer to label a request "contentious." He said, "Please make it one. It is." Why is a political staffer deciding to label an FOI request as contentious?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, the FOI process is clearly spelled out in legislation and regulation. I'm confident that those regulations and legislation have been followed in all cases.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This is about the systematic erosion of Ontarians' rights to access government information. The freedom-of-information act is pretty simple: A citizen asks for information, and unless there's a compelling legal reason to keep it secret, it is shared. Instead, we see staff in backrooms labelling requests based on who made them. Is the Acting Premier concerned about what looks like political interference by his government in stifling the FOI process?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I should remind the member opposite that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has an unofficial benchmark of 80% for good compliance on freedom of information. In 2009-10, our government achieved 85%; our overall compliance is 91%. I'm not certain, but I'm quite satisfied that most of the information that may have been labelled contentious has been released publicly.

I'm proud of the government's record on freedom of information. I'm proud of my ministry's record on freedom of information. We'll continue to work within the laws and the regulations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Numbers can be used to obscure as well as illuminate.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Be calm, be calm.

The information that people are looking for doesn't belong to the Liberal Party; it belongs to the people of Ontario. The FOI process is supposed to be impartial and transparent, but the only thing that's transparently clear is that this government is politicizing the process. Will the Acting Premier order his government and political staffers to stop interfering with FOI requests?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I reject the premise that we are interfering.

I would like to share with the House some information about a memo that was written in November of 1990—now let me think who was in office then. That memo from cabinet office described contentious issues, indicating that the government and ministers should be made aware of contentious requests. It was your government that set it up. We followed it. We're made aware of contentious requests. And do you know what? Some 85% of the time we make them public.

That question is a joke. He's taking facts out of context, refusing to share with Ontarians the full information that he has in his possession. He's the only one who is not being open and transparent in this exchange.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** To the Minister of Government Services: You're the minister responsible for signing off on the secret deal to pay a 1% wage increase. If 1% of 38,000 workers is the bargain you struck with a public sector union leader who is not contributing to the Working Families coalition, how much will Ontario families pay for the deals you have in store for the union leaders who are part of the McGuinty Liberal attack dog campaign, the Working Families coalition?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Is he the Minister of Government Services or government secrecy?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I was just seeking clarification.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, member from Renfrew, I was about to make comments to you; that is, your member was asking a question, and you're interjecting when she's asking that question. I'd just ask that you be conscious of her desire to be able to ask that question in a manner that isn't being interfered with.

Minister?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I'm not sure what the definition of "secret agreement" is on the other side. Let me say this: We have 38,000 employees in OPSEU, and this agreement was presented to all the local presidents and they presented it to all the members in OPSEU. If it was presented to all the members in OPSEU, how could it be a secret agreement?

The other thing is, at the end of the day, the agreement between an employer and an employee is reached after negotiations. Every agreement is different, and so one agreement cannot be compared to another agreement. In this agreement, in fact, the four-year agreement led to about an 8.7% increase with a 1.25% decrease in cost. So the net is about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I can give him help with that: The definition of "secret" is withholding it from the public, and that's what your government has done—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that, because it was directed at the minister.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

The Minister of Government Services not only has ministerial accountability for the secret wage increase but, to help him out further, the lawyers who admitted it was a secret deal for a secret wage increase came from his ministry. You still have to settle with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Nurses' Asso-



ciation. They're all members of the Working Families Coalition; they all contribute big money to the war chest of the attack ad campaign—who works for the Premier's former chief of staff.

How much more money will Ontario families have to pay so that they can settle a score for their smear—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment that was made, please.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** We are absolutely determined to get the best deal for the taxpayers. Let me just show the numbers. The numbers speak for themselves. In 2002, they had a three-year deal at 11.45%, with an eight-week strike by the OPSEU employees. That's what they got: They had an eight-week strike and an 11.45% increase. We had—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean, you just asked the question. I would ask that you give the courtesy to the minister to hear the response. You know the standing orders. If you're not satisfied, you can call for a late show.

Minister?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** We had a four-year deal with an 8.5% increase, with a 1.25% decrease in the cost, so the net is around 7.5% for a four-year deal. That is our deal, compared to 11.45% over three years, with the eight-week strike.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Parents need full information about the safety record of child care centres so they can choose the safest programs for their children. The McGuinty government has failed to publicly post information about abuse, mistreatment, injuries and deaths at child care centres for four years.

On April 18, the Minister of Education said, "The wait is unacceptable," and promised that inspection information would be posted within the month. Will the government keep its promise and post information about serious incidents at child care centres by May 18?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** The honourable member is correct: I did indicate that it was important, when the issue came to this assembly, that information would be made available within the month. In fact, it has. Maybe it was appropriate that on Mother's Day, it was posted on the ministry website.

Now families have a very comprehensive website—I've looked at it a number of times; I looked at it yesterday—and I believe that it provides parents with very important information, probably the most comprehensive list of information available to any parents anywhere in this country.

We're the only jurisdiction that has made this commitment. We are providing it; it is there now. I would encourage parents who are in the market for child care facilities to go to the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The information posted has not satisfied anyone. Today's Toronto Star reports that the McGuinty government is continuing to stall and has set no deadline to post reports on serious incidents at child care centres. This means that parents in Ontario will continue to be forced to place their infants and children in a child care centre without full knowledge of the safety record at that centre.

Parents need full information—not partial information—to protect their children's safety. When will the McGuinty government finally post full information on serious incidents—or will this be another McGuinty broken promise on child care?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm very happy to stand in my place today and say that our government has kept our promise to provide parents with the most comprehensive list of information for parents who are about to decide where they might want to have their children in child care.

With respect to serious incidents, it's also important to say to all the members of this assembly that there is no jurisdiction in Canada, in Ontario—not the city of Toronto, which the honourable member's leader stated in this assembly—providing serious-incidents reports on a website. There are very serious legal issues that would be impacted there.

1100

This is something that, obviously, we will work with the sector on. We want to be sure that parents have all the information they need. But we have kept our promise to provide parents with comprehensive—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Just this past Tuesday, the member opposite, who represents the riding of Thornhill, responded very negatively to the minister's statement on Ontario's service standards. In paraphrasing the member opposite, he stated that the PC government's Red Tape Commission, which he claimed had been very successful in repealing and removing various outdated acts, regulations and statutes, was abolished by the Liberal government.

I would like to ask the minister directly why the McGuinty government scrapped the commission that, according to a singular source, was apparently serving Ontario well.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I am delighted because I too am reminded often of those three trench coats. We were

all curious as to what was behind the trench coats, as I recall.

Anyway, they did do some things. No one would deny that they did find antiquated regulation and eliminated it. For example, they could count among their big wins eliminating the Hypnosis Act for travelling road shows. We don't know what benefit that had, in fact, to business today in Ontario or even in the late 1990s, when they actually did this work.

The pride we have in Open for Business is simply this: We went directly to business and we said to business, "What do you need to do better business in Ontario?" They would come to us, give us their priorities and that's what we would do, on a clock, and we went back to them with resolution. It has been a terrific process and I wish, frankly, that they had done it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** That does explain why the PC government's Red Tape Commission was disbanded, but I think there's a second element to my query.

In the same response which I referred to earlier, the member from Thornhill stated that, from his perspective, "The McGuinty government has not done nearly enough to create the conditions for a speedy and true economic recovery."

Minister, that's quite a hefty accusation, and, I submit, misguided. Facts are important when informing the public about policy of the government. I'd like to ask the minister to inform this House what the McGuinty government has indeed done to create the conditions for economic recovery in Ontario by reducing regulatory burdens on the businesses of this province.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I am delighted because, in fact, only someone who's really not watching or doesn't know the business wouldn't see that 70,000 regulatory burdens being eliminated is indeed a huge achievement for the government, across all ministries. Just this past month, we posted the business service standards online. It had 1,000 hits to the website because people want to know how we meet the standards that we set out in the business that we have to deliver so they can do their business. That is a huge achievement: that there are 500 business services posted there, and that they're improving all the time makes a big difference.

I would encourage members of the opposition to call someone like Bette Jean Crews, who is the head of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We met with that group last week, and last week they told us what a tremendous process we've adopted in Open for Business, that in fact we are and have been—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. The Fraser Institute's report card on Ontario's secondary schools confirmed what families have suspected for some time: Despite the government's

boasts about achievements in education, student achievement has stalled in literacy and math. The report found no statistical upward trend in student achievement despite the investment of billions of dollars. Ontario families do expect value for their money; they're just not seeing it right now.

Minister, why are the families in this province not getting value for their money?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm so disappointed—not surprised—that the honourable member would stand in her place and seek to diminish the efforts of teachers and students in the province of Ontario.

We have empirical evidence: Graduation rates have increased. When we make this announcement, what do they do on the other side? They say, "Well, you know, if you've taken five years to graduate, you really don't count." We believe in students. We are grateful for the efforts of their teachers. We are very happy to make it plain to everyone in Ontario that we are building a strong secondary system, in spite of what the honourable member might want to say. It really does bother me when people come into this room and try to diminish the accomplishments of students, the efforts of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Minister, we support the hard work of teachers, but not only does the Fraser Institute report card confirm—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Please continue.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Not only does the Fraser Institute report card confirm that student achievement has stagnated in math and literacy, but according to the Confederation of University Faculty Associations, students are entering post-secondary programs without the prerequisite literacy and math skills. As a result, they're forced to now offer remedial programs to these students before they get started.

Minister, a good investment requires a good return. Clearly, the government is not delivering. Why not?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Let me tell the honourable member about what good return is. Bad return is when one out of three students doesn't graduate from secondary school. That is the record of the previous government. A much better return is when over 80% of students in our schools are now graduating. A better return is when the program for international student assessment, an independent international body, would say that our students are improving.

I know on that side of the House they race to diminish the efforts and accomplishments of students and teachers in this province. We are building the best education system in the world, and we will always trumpet the accomplishments of our students and how well they are doing.

## CORONER'S INQUEST

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety. Over the last 10 years, seven



teenage high school students from remote First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario relocated to Thunder Bay to go to high school. Those seven young teenagers all disappeared and then turned up dead. Can the minister tell me what the government's reaction has been to the disappearance and death of these seven young First Nation people?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** As the member would know, there is an inquest under way up north with respect to the deaths. He would know that. He does know that.

We take any tragedy very seriously and take the death of young people who travelled to school very seriously. We're working through every ministry in every way to make sure that people are safe. There are some very serious questions to be addressed. One of them is: Is the federal government providing the support for education in First Nations that it should? Is it providing the health care in First Nations that it should? Is it providing the infrastructure support in First Nations that it should? Those are just some of the questions. The other questions will be addressed, I expect, through the inquest that my friend knows is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Attorney General ought to know that the inquest that he refers to has been delayed, and delayed indefinitely, because this government doesn't seem to be able to get its act together in terms of the representativeness of juries and inquest juries.

But this is a bigger issue. These are seven young citizens of Ontario. These are seven teenagers. I suggest to the minister and to this government that if seven teenage high school students disappeared from London, there would be a different reaction. If seven teenage high school students disappeared from Hamilton, there would be a different reaction. Can the minister explain how seven teenage citizens of Ontario can disappear and die in a city like Thunder Bay, and there's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

1110

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's a tragedy for the families; it's a tragedy for the communities; it's a tragedy for all involved. And that's why we are working on answers wherever we can find them.

The specific issue that my friend raises, he knows is a part of an inquest. He knows that the inquest would expect that submissions be made to it rather than somewhere else. He knows that, and he shouldn't speak about, with respect, why an inquest is proceeding or not in a place like this when he is providing only a small, incomplete part of any answer. We're going to look for the answers in every way we can to provide justice to the families who've lost their loved—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Attorney General. Ontario is one of the most vibrant and diverse places to live in the world, and our diversity is one of the things that makes Ontario such a great place to live and has attracted immigrants, like my parents, to Ontario. Our province has a long history as a leader in protecting the human rights of our citizens, creating a fair and equitable society. Successive generations of Ontarians have built upon that history, and we are all proud of how far we've come over the past 50 years.

Because our society is constantly evolving and changing, we must be sure that we remain aware of any potential threats to equality and inclusion in our society. I know that some of my constituents are particularly concerned that during difficult economic times, protection of human rights might be overlooked. Can the Attorney General tell us why it is so important to protect and preserve human rights in the province of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** My colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex outlined the reason when she talked about her parents coming to Canada, to Ontario. We are the most diverse place on the face of the earth. We are a place where people from all over the world, from all different countries, speaking all different languages, practising all different types of religion and culture, have come to one place, and they're able to live together, work together and play together in a way they cannot do elsewhere. You can see strife elsewhere, but you don't see it here.

One of the reasons is the foundation that our human rights system provides to enable people to do that, to enable them to raise grievances; a foundation that's been constructed through Frost and Robarts, continuing through McGuinty; a foundation that enables people from all over the world to live in a way they can't elsewhere. It is a foundation we need to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I know that my constituents will be pleased to know that our government is continuing to make the human rights of all Ontarians a priority.

Our human rights have led to many important protections against discrimination, such as in the 1960s, when we ensured fair access to accommodation, services or facilities regardless of race, creed, colour, nationality, ancestry or place of origin. In the 1970s, we had equal pay for equal work; in the 1980s, protection from discrimination because of marital status or disability; in the 1990s, the extension of family benefits to same-sex couples.

My constituents would like to know what our government is doing to ensure that Ontarians remain on the right path when it comes to protecting human rights. Can the Attorney General tell this House what kinds of improvements this government is making to strengthen the protection and human rights of all Ontarians?



**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's an important point. Just a few years ago, taking advice that had been around for more than a decade, we did several things to strengthen our approach to human rights. We maintained the independent, specialized right and approach to hear cases that is the tribunal. We strengthened the tribunal. We allowed people direct access to the tribunal rather than requiring that their cases go through the commission first. Direct access to the body that can hear your case and provide a remedy is essential.

Second, last year the tribunal realized that it wanted to have some specialized additional rights to dismiss cases without merit. That was done; that was brought in.

Third, we provided the legal support centre to make sure the people who can't afford lawyers can get lawyers so they can—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Despite this government's promise four years ago to support and promote the skilled trades, Ontario's young skilled workers are still subject to restrictive apprenticeship ratios in far too many of our skilled trades. These restrictive apprenticeship ratios are placing roadblocks in the career paths of our badly needed apprentices. Students who have finished their diplomas are unable to complete their certification because they cannot find a sufficient number of journeymen to apprentice under.

When will this minister lower the outdated and restrictive apprenticeship ratios for Ontario's skilled trades to ensure that our apprentices are able to train and work in Ontario?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm always happy to address the issue of ratios here in the Legislature. The honourable member will be aware that the issue of ratios was one of the complex issues related to apprenticeship which fuelled our interest in establishing a college of trades: to allow the trades to have ownership of and responsibility for apprenticeships, training standards, compulsory certification and ratios.

We have moved forward with the college of trades, which is bringing voices from all the sectors across the province. They are looking at the type of criteria that we need in order to bring forth a ratio policy that makes sense and make sure that we look at a variety of factors in terms—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I guess the minister is referring to the unelected minister Dillon, but anyway.

This restrictive apprenticeship ratio that this government continues to support isn't just affecting our young skilled workers. I have been contacted by several veterans who are seeking to transition from military to civilian life and are having difficulty finding journeymen to ap-

prentice under. The United States has the highly successful Helmets to Hardhats program, which has been helping veterans in the United States military transition to the skilled trades for a number of years. The newly elected federal government of Canada pledged to do the same in their March budget.

This government is neglecting not only Ontario students but our veterans as well. When will this minister lower his antiquated and restrictive apprenticeship ratios and do the right thing?

**Hon. John Milloy:** It's unbelievable that he would stand in this House and do anything short of praising the government for its record in terms of skilled trades. Since we took office in this province in 2003, we have doubled the number of apprentices. We currently have 120,000 apprentices in this province.

We do not want to stop there. We want to make sure that not only do we grow the number of apprentices, but also that they are receiving first-class training. That's why we took the extraordinary step of establishing the college of trades; of sitting down with people from all sectors of the economy, including apprentices and employers, and asking them, "How we can strengthen our apprenticeship system? And most importantly, how can we attract more people to the apprenticeship?"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Acting Premier: This morning, correctional workers are at Queen's Park because of the McGuinty government's rash decision to close jails in Walkerton, Owen Sound and Sarnia. This decision was made without any consultations and without proper planning. OPSEU, local mayors and community members have made the trip to Queen's Park multiple times now, urging this government to reflect on its poor decision-making.

Is the government finally willing to listen to their good advice?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community Safety.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** These are always very difficult decisions when governments have to make them. The member would be aware that we have a deficit in excess of \$16 billion at the present time, and the government is looking for each and every way to be able to find some efficiencies, which it has in this case. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has provided to me, as minister, options that would be available, advice that would be available on what would be advisable in terms of some of the older buildings that exist in the province of Ontario and the relative cost of operating them compared to transferring to some of the newer buildings that are available in the province.

1120

We want to ensure as well that we work with OPSEU in ensuring that there would be, for instance, jobs available—



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I know the minister to be a fair and reasonable person. I'm confident that he didn't make this decision; that this decision came out of the Premier's office and he's being forced now to be the Premier's spokesperson. The closure of these jails is going to be detrimental to the communities they are in and it's going to be detrimental to corrections within correctional services.

The government's financial reasoning simply doesn't hold water. Absent from this government's calculations is the high cost of transporting inmates those long distances, not to mention the treacherous conditions in the winter months.

Will the minister at least slow down this process so that no final decision is made until after October 6, so that there can be effective reflection on the wisdom or lack of wisdom applying to these jail closures?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to assure the member that with the facilities being closed, the people will be offered other positions. I know the great difficulty, and I know that the ministry had a difficult time with this. Other ministers have had the same difficulty.

Here's what Mr. Runciman said in 1998: "What we are doing with respect to the restructuring process is addressing the call of the provincial auditor in two reports, talking about the very high-cost system of corrections in Ontario. We currently have the highest-cost provincial system in the country, significantly higher than in other provinces. We are making an effort, which the NDP initiated some time ago, to close our older, high-cost, inefficient and in many respects unsafe facilities."

We're trying our very best to be able to deal with the deficit we have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** To the Minister of Transportation: Last month, the Ministry of Transportation released its draft study on the Niagara to GTA corridor, and I understand that MTO continues to seek public input by consulting with our municipal partners and stakeholders.

Meanwhile, my colleagues across the aisle do not seem to have a consensus on this issue. It was interesting to read in this morning's Hamilton Spectator that the members of Halton and Burlington intend to bring petitions to the Legislature today in opposition to their own leader's planned mega-highway through the greenbelt and the escarpment. In June 2003, the member from Burlington was prepared to take the former PC government to court to stop this. Good for her.

Speaker, through you to the minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The first thing I want to say about this issue is that all our members support our

plan. We're on one page. Our Niagara to GTA study takes an integrated approach to transit planning; it takes an integrated approach to transportation planning. I remind this House and I remind the public that in 1916, when the current ministry was established, it was called the department of highways. But we've moved beyond that. We have to have a much broader view of transportation.

We're getting feedback from local municipalities on our plan. Port Colborne, Welland, Burlington and the Niagara region have all expressed support for our plan. The city of Niagara expressed this in a letter to me. Niagara Falls city council wanted to go on record restating the municipality's position of being opposed to any new highway system. So we are very much on the right track.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Minister, it's certainly a relief to my constituents and the good folk in Halton to hear that they have a government that listens to their concerns and is committed to protecting environmentally sensitive lands.

Whenever I speak to my local residents, they're absolutely shocked to learn that the Leader of the Opposition actually voted against the greenbelt. No wonder he wants to cut off conversations about the issue and simply bulldoze over precious green space.

Minister, can you elaborate further as to what our government is specifically doing to ensure the protection of these sensitive areas?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I've said, we've gotten a lot of support for our position. The Greenbelt Council is supportive and the Protecting Escarpment Rural Land group is supportive.

What the previous government did was launch into a plan to build a mega-highway through the Niagara Escarpment. What we've said is that we need to look at a much more integrated approach. We need to look at maximizing the transit usage. We need to look at roads. We need to look at rail. How we can expand what's already there without going into new and sensitive land? We know this area is particularly complex because of economic, community and environmental issues, but we have had extensive public consultation.

I'm glad that the member has had the opportunity to bring this issue forward, because we will continue to talk with the communities and look for the sophisticated, integrated approach that is demanded by the 21st century.

## ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, over the last two years, you've made grain and oilseed farmers beg for extensions to the risk management program. Last year, you didn't announce the extension until the end of July, well after the farmers had to make planting decisions and secure operating lines of credit. Farmers were looking for a permanent program in the budget, but the budget document didn't say that; it announced an extension.



Why should farmers believe that the program is actually going to be there when they need it if the official documents won't say "permanent"?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise and answer this question. I've got to say, for the members to stand up and ask that question when they, quite frankly, voted against a permanent risk management program for our farmers—we understand that the current suite of business programs doesn't work. They don't provide the predictability, they don't provide the bankability and they don't provide the stability.

So what has the coalition been doing? I want to inform the members from across the way that they've been working very hard, developing programs that involve three partners, those being the farmer, the provincial government and the federal government. They are working very hard to make all of that come together in a package that was supported by the budget—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, if it's a permanent program, why didn't the budget documents say so? I'm not the only one who has concerns. I have a letter from the grain and oilseed farmers that expresses their concern that there hasn't been a full commitment in writing.

Minister, let's remember the history. This government dragged its heels on this program and then announced it right before the last election. Even though it worked, you made farmers beg for extensions until 200 days before the next election. Now you expect them to believe it's a permanent program and that they'll be treated fairly even though the official document doesn't say so.

Minister, after ignoring them for four years, do you really think farmers will just accept this government's word that they will be treated fairly in the future? Do you really believe that? Do you really think they should—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** It is just beyond the pale that anybody from across the way would ask this question. The coalition understands, and every commodity understands, that they have a permanent risk management program. They are working very hard to make that happen, and they know that that was supported in the budget.

But for the member to ask that question when (a) they have no plan, and (b) what did they do when they were in government? They stood by, wringing their hands, while 1,000 farmers left the land. That was their plan: to stand by and watch the farmers leave the land.

And then what did they do? They then cut the ag budget. Then they shut down the offices, and they got out of town. No plan over there, no support for the plan on this side, and then they won't even ask the federal—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Minister of Economic Development. Minister of Agriculture.  
New question.

## CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services: Is the minister aware that almost a year ago, the Superior Court of Justice made a decision stating that the Child and Family Services Review Board does not have the power to hear children's aid societies' complaints that are before the courts?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to spend a moment talking about the important oversight that we do have when it comes to children's aid societies.

I want to highlight that there is Family Court oversight; there is the Child and Family Services Review Board oversight; the Ombudsman, who does have oversight of the Child and Family Services Review Board; the Auditor General; and the Office of the Chief Coroner.

1130

Yes, my colleague opposite does raise an issue that the CFSRB has an appeal presently before the courts where they continue to defend the rubric and the area of authority that they importantly have as a specialized tribunal that has expertise to deal with these highly complicated and sensitive matters, and that, in our view, is the appropriate forum to deal with these issues involving children and families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The minister would know that since the Superior Court of Justice's decision was made last year, over 50 children's aid societies' hearings have been put on ice. Many more will be on hold in the coming months.

Let me understand this: The government will not allow the Ombudsman to oversee children's aid societies, and the courts are not allowing the CFSRB to hear any cases before a judge, yet the government is adamant that there are no problems with the system.

How is the government planning to help the growing number of families that have no one to turn to when they have a problem with the children's aid society?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I think it's important for families right across the province that might be watching to understand that we have a very rigorous variety of oversights that allow you, as an individual, to come forward with a complaint if you do have one with respect to a children's aid society. The OACAS and other organizations have been very clear about their support for rigorous oversight of CASs. It's a very regulated procedure, as it should be. These are highly important and emotional and technical matters that involve our children, and so we very much appreciate the variety of oversights that we've put in place.

At the same time, the CFSRB is a specialized tribunal. We have expanded their powers and increased their mandate to give them the opportunity to review these matters in a holistic way. There is an appeal presently, and that should proceed and is proceeding through the courts, where arguments are being made with respect to their oversight—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.



## TOURISM

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a question for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, this morning I had a meeting with some of my students from the riding of Davenport, and they're certainly eager to begin summer. They are ready to visit our clear waters, our clear lakes, our clear campgrounds and to visit our canals, but summer also provides us the opportunity to visit such places as museums and art galleries, historical parks and cultural and entertainment parklands. They offer children the chance to learn and families the chance to bond. But in a globally competitive market, attractions in other provinces and countries are working hard to lure families away to their places. That's why it is important that we continue to strive to make Ontario's attractions the best in Canada and in the world.

What is this government doing, Mr. Minister, to ensure attractions in this province contribute—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. On top of that, I want to thank the honourable member for promoting diversity, tourism and culture across the province.

Ontario is home to some of the leading attractions in Canada. These attractions are well positioned to compete nationally and internationally, and offer families and visitors across this province wonderful vacationing destinations, attractions such as St. Lawrence Parks, Niagara Falls, Huronia Historical Parks, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McMichael Canadian art gallery, Ontario Place, Science North and Fort William Historical Park. Together, these and other attractions are making Ontario the leading destination for tourists in Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This is really exciting news for families. Mr. Minister, many of the attractions that we're celebrating are really milestones in our history. This year, why not use that opportunity to ensure that visitors across the province, and for that matter internationally, are aware of what Ontario has to offer? For example, places like Ontario Place, celebrating its 40-year anniversary—I remember visiting, Mr. Speaker, the fantastic Cinesphere, as you did. What a beautiful view of Lake Ontario. What a beautiful view of the riding of Davenport.

Minister, I understand that part of the 40th anniversary is hosting various events. Can you tell this House: What are we planning to host this anniversary and others in the province?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** As Ontario Place celebrates its 40th anniversary, our government would like to congratulate all the dedicated staff, volunteers and board members who contribute continuously, making it one of the leading attractions in Ontario.

In 2010, Ontario Place attracted 800,000 visitors. To attract even more visitors, admission to the grounds is free this year. Ontario Place's door is wide open to welcome visitors to take advantage of this opportunity. It

will save Ontario families some of their hard-earned money while enjoying a wonderful day out. The last time admission to the grounds was free was 20 years ago.

We are also doing more to promote other attractions. Summer is around the corner. There will be many, many festivals and events across—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you and the Minister of the Environment: I have spoken to you; I have questions on the order paper; I've presented petitions from October of last year. The issue is the movement and placement of clean fill, or commercial fill, in abandoned pits and quarries. Quite honestly, this issue is evident on the Earth-worx site on Lakeridge Road and Morgans Road, of which you're aware.

I'm asking you today to take leadership and convene a meeting of the stakeholders, including municipal leadership, to develop a procedure to move and test soil when being placed in commercial fill operations in abandoned pits and quarries. Will you call that meeting on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** To the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** On behalf of myself and my colleague, my seatmate, I want to assure the member, first of all, we appreciate the fact that you have raised this issue on behalf of your constituents.

I recall that there was a letter I just sent the member, which perhaps he has not read yet, where my ministry is more than happy to continue to sit down with the residents in your riding and, as well, with your municipal partners so that we can ensure that we have what we all need, which is to protect our sources of drinking water; to protect the legacy of the Oak Ridges moraine; and to ensure we have a set of rules that are robust, so people can be assured that the environmental protections that they count on for them and their families are there and will continue to be there.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to correct my record. At one point in a response to a question from the member from Nepean-Carleton, I said the four-year deal adds up to 8.5%. It actually is 8.75%. The savings are 1.5%, for a net of 7.5%.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. That is a point of order.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## ONTARIO GREENHOUSE ALLIANCE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to once again welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park. I want to recognize Rejean Picard, chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance; Andrew Kuyvenhoven, chair of Flowers Canada; and Don Taylor, chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, who are here in the gallery this afternoon. I want to thank them for coming to Queen's Park to share their concerns and provide MPPs with a great lunch made from fresh Ontario produce. It is always a great event and a great opportunity to hear directly from the greenhouse growers.

Ontario's greenhouses—both vegetables and flowers—contribute greatly to our economy. Their annual gross payroll is over \$270 million, and their farm gate sales are well over \$1 billion. However, like many sectors of our agriculture industry, they are struggling with high input costs, like the increasing cost of hydro.

Our greenhouse growers are significant exporters. That means that they are impacted by the high dollar. It also means that they need to be competitive with growers in other jurisdictions.

Today, many of them are struggling with government red tape and over-regulation. Government needs to make it easier for them to get on with doing what they do best: growing great Ontario produce and Ontario flowers.

On behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I want to once again thank the greenhouse alliance for coming to Queen's Park, and assure them that we are committed to continuing to support a strong greenhouse sector for the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We welcome you. We also like to enjoy TOGA parties at Queen's Park.

Member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've got half a dozen punchlines there, Speaker. I'm not going to try any of them.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** James McIntyre is 81 years old—a good man, worked hard all his life, a good member of the community. In 2006, he was diagnosed with dementia. He's now in a private long-term-care home. His wife, Gwendolyn McIntyre, who is 69 years old and suffering from lupus, dearly misses him and wants to be closer to him. His daughter Cathy Wall has become James McIntyre's most aggressive advocate—because she goes to the long-term-care facility and finds her father sitting in a hallway in soiled trousers, and the stench she describes as impossible to endure, never mind sit in it. She describes the long-term-care facility as so understaffed that her father is getting less and less assistance when it comes to things like eating and even feeding himself, so he's losing weight. She's frustrated by waiting lists and a real shortage of long-term-care beds down

in Niagara, which means that her father can't move closer to Virgil, where Gwendolyn, his wife, lives.

We've addressed these issues with the minister, we've addressed them with the CCAC, and we've addressed them with the long-term-care facility itself, and what we've discovered is a McGuinty Liberal government that turns its back on seniors in this province and that has betrayed them and their families. This government should be ashamed.

 ROTARY CHESHIRE HOMES  
AND CANADIAN  
HELEN KELLER CENTRE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm always happy to speak about Willowdale. Today, as I have before, I'd like to recognize Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre, located in Willowdale on Willowdale Avenue.

I'm pleased to follow up on an announcement that my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services made. As part of the recent Ontario budget, our government will continue to ensure that funding for intervenor services is available to organizations like Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Helen Keller centre. They do very, very good work; they provide a home for the deaf and blind. This is in addition to the nearly \$22 million that the government has already spent on intervenor services. We are now working with the industry to develop a new funding model that matches resources and needs.

I want to commend Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre. Tomorrow, they'll be hosting their first annual awareness reception at Queen's Park. I invite all members to stop by committee room 2 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to get a better understanding of the front-line services that are truly vital to the deaf-blind community here in Ontario.

The Canadian Helen Keller Centre and Rotary Cheshire Homes in Willowdale are probably among the premier homes, at the leading edge of services that are provided for the deaf and blind. They are an icon for this kind of service, and we are thankful for the intervenor services provided by this government.

## PEMBROKE LUMBER KINGS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yesterday in Camrose, Alberta, the Pembroke Lumber Kings earned the title of Canada's Junior A champions, winning the RBC Cup with a 2-0 victory over the Vernon Vipers, representatives of the Pacific league.

It was a thrilling victory, keeping everyone on the edge of their seats until an empty-net goal sealed the win with 15 seconds left. The Lumber Kings were certainly the underdogs, as the Vipers were seeking a record third consecutive title. They were undefeated in the tournament, including a 5-3 victory over the Kings earlier in the week. Tied at zeros after two, Jonathan Milley inter-



cepted a shot from the blue line and scored on a breakaway at 13:40 of the third period. Milley also added the empty-netter, but not before making a key shot block with a minute left, taking a blast from the point off his foot.

Coach Sheldon Keefe and the boys knew it wasn't going to be easy, but they came up with a game plan, stuck to it, and in the end emerged on top. Lumber King netminder Francis Dupuis played a fantastic game, making 40 saves, many of the heart-stopping variety. In the first period, the Vipers peppered Dupuis, outshooting the Kings by a 15 to 5 margin. He would not yield.

What a thrilling moment when Kings captain Ben Reinhardt, playing in his final game, hoisted the cup, one of the toughest to win in all of sport, with no less than 137 teams from 10 leagues vying for it when the season began.

The Lumber Kings are five-time repeat champions of the CCHL and Reinhardt has been a member of every one of those teams.

Heartiest congratulations go out to Keefe, his entire coaching staff, and each and every one of the committed, focused players who have worked so hard to bring Pembroke its first national championship. To the entire organization, well done. To the city of Pembroke and the most amazing fans in the world, who have supported this team so tremendously over the years, you all share in this victory. Savour it, enjoy it. It's a great moment for everyone in the valley.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We'll have to start calling you Foster Yakabuski.

## ORDRE DE LA PLÉIADE

**M. Phil McNeely:** J'ai assisté, le 4 mai, ici-même à l'Assemblée législative, à la cérémonie de remise des décorations de l'Ordre de la Pléiade, section Ontario. Cet ordre, créé par l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie en 1976, est destiné à reconnaître les mérites de femmes et d'hommes qui se sont particulièrement distingués en servant les idéaux de coopération et d'amitié de la francophonie en Ontario.

En tant que membre du comité de sélection, ce fut vraiment un privilège de participer au processus de sélection des six récipiendaires de la médaille de l'Ordre de la Pléiade, 2011. Il s'agit de M<sup>me</sup> Mariette Dallaire, de Harty; Marguerite Martel, de North Bay; Jean-Marc Aubin, de Hanmer; Alain Baudot, de Toronto; Félix Saint-Denis, d'Embrun; et son père, Yves Saint-Denis, de Chute-à-Blondeau.

Cette célébration marque les efforts et l'apport indéniable de ces individus à la promotion de la culture française dans leur communauté respective, mais aussi au niveau du rayonnement de la francophonie ailleurs. Ces récipiendaires deviennent des ambassadeurs de la langue française. Leur influence est assurément reconnue dans la communauté francophone. Ils sont des symboles pour les générations qui suivent pour leurs mérites et leurs contributions à l'épanouissement du français en Ontario.

Encore une fois, félicitations aux six récipiendaires.

## SAMANTHA ATTEW

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I rise today to congratulate Samantha Attew, who has been selected by the Milton Chamber of Commerce as Citizen of the Year. Samantha has been involved in many different organizations and helping to promote various programs in Milton, including the Friends of Milton Hospital and the Grow Milton Hospital projects, which she was heavily involved in.

Her list of community activities goes on and on and on. This is a lady who has lived in Milton for less than five years. When she moved into town, she immediately got involved. She saw a need to do something. She didn't ask someone else to do it. She didn't make excuses. She rolled up her sleeves and she went to work, and she's done that time and time again. She is a very passionate person who gives her all to these projects, and the chamber of commerce has made a very wise decision in selecting her as Citizen of the Year for 2011.

## 1310

I would point out that it's always good to give a job to a busy person—and Samantha, indeed, is busy. A busy person is well organized, and she gets the job done. No one in town will ever say that Samantha dropped the ball. She gets the job done time and time again. Again, congratulations to Samantha Attew, selected as the Milton Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year for 2011.

## SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Every year, in May, we celebrate South Asian month. We celebrate the presence and heritage of people with roots in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

The first South Asians arrived in Canada in 1897. The South Asian community has fully embraced the Canadian values of respect, freedom and multiculturalism. We have brought the South Asian spice and flavour to Canada. We have been involved in building this great nation from the railroad to its modern glory. Even today, the South Asian community is second to none in its contribution to the development and prosperity of Canada.

From a personal standpoint, I too am South Asian. My family immigrated from India. I have grown up in the communities of Mississauga and Brampton. I'm very privileged to represent the great riding of Brampton West. This riding's population is over 50% people of South Asian descent. We celebrate all religious and cultural festivals, from Vaisakhi, Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanza.

In this House, my South Asian colleagues also share and embrace these views.

South Asian Heritage Month has grown dramatically since 2001. Dozens of celebrations take place each year, including events at the Ontario Parliament, the Gerrard Street bazaar and religious and community functions.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate South Asians across Ontario and the constituents of my great

riding. I request all members of this House to go out and celebrate this month.

### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Tobacco use kills over 13,000 Ontarians every year. This costs the Ontario health care system \$1.9 billion and the province's economy \$4.4 billion in productivity loss.

Recognizing that these figures are not acceptable, the McGuinty government took the initiative five years ago to introduce provincial tobacco control legislation that would be the strongest of its kind in North America. Through the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, we showed real leadership by taking a patchwork of municipal bylaws and introducing province-wide action in the war against tobacco use.

Smoke-free Ontario protects us from the impact of second-hand smoke by eliminating smoking in indoor public spaces. It prevents our children from starting to smoke by limiting their exposure to tobacco and reducing their access to tobacco products. All are protected from the allure of cigarettes by elimination of power walls in stores.

As a physician, I'm so pleased that smoking rates continue to fall in Ontario as fewer young people start to smoke and more Ontarians are quitting through programs introduced by the Ministry of Health Promotion. I'm proud to say Ontario has one of the lowest smoking rates amongst Canadian provinces.

With the help of Ontario's supportive partners, such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Cancer Society and the Lung Association, as well as health care professionals, the McGuinty government has led the way on tobacco control.

### EUROPEAN UNION ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** At 12 noon today, we celebrated the 26th anniversary of the European Union. Helping us to celebrate this special day, in the Speaker's gallery on the east side, are a number of persons who I would like to mention today who were there and made a special mark on the celebrations: the president of the European club, Mr. Marek Goldyn; Jennifer Wawszczyk from the executive; Allyson Luck, also on the executive; Lidiya Koval on the executive; and Julia Prodaniuk, also on the executive of the European club. Welcome to Queen's Park.

In celebrating this special day, we are very much reminded of what can happen when extreme forms of nationalism are being overcome. The European Union, of course, in terms of celebrating this event, is showing the whole world that working together in co-operation, working with each other, can mean a whole lot of difference in terms of the economy and certainly in terms of the culture as well. So we are reminded that after the first war and after the second war in Europe, when over 50 million people died and the countries of Europe were all

devastated—especially after the Second World War—it was necessary to think of a new paradigm, a new way of co-operation, a new way of doing things.

And so I'm very much delighted to have people in the audience who are celebrating with us the 26th anniversary. I know that the future for Europe is great because they will lead the way and show the rest of the world that it is always much better to work in co-operation, as opposed to nationalism.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm going to beg the indulgence of the House and give the member from Burlington—I know she had some guests who were coming in and there was a bit of a delay for them coming in. I'll give you the opportunity to introduce your guests.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that opportunity.

I would like to introduce to the House members of the Burlington community: Mayor Rick Goldring; Councillor Blair Lancaster; Councillor John Taylor; Frank McKeown, chief of staff to the mayor; and Donna Kell, the manager of public affairs. But also, more importantly, a resident of Burlington in the hamlet of Lowville, Janie Moorse. Welcome.

### PETITIONS

#### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I have a petition to present to the House, and I believe my colleague from Halton, Ted Chudleigh, is going to be presenting some as well. Collectively, there are over 3,000 names on this petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly, as follows:

"We, the undersigned, strongly oppose the location of a new Niagara-to-GTA transportation corridor passing through the rural area of Burlington, as indicated on map number 3 of the regional official plan amendment 38—draft decision of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing—November 2010, or as shown by the Ministry of Transportation Niagara-to-GTA draft transportation development strategy, June 2010."

### TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the HST, effective July 1, 2010, will raise gasoline prices by 8%; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario will collect approximately \$1.6 billion in new tax dollars; and

"Whereas municipalities need access to a greater source of revenue beyond what they collect in property tax;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"While our roads continue to deteriorate and our province's infrastructure deficit is at an all-time high, CAA is asking Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, to dedicate a portion of the HST collected on gasoline and diesel to transportation infrastructure and maintenance."

It is signed by hundreds and hundreds of people, and I will affix my signature thereto.

#### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I'd like very much to thank Phil Saunders of Kenninghall Boulevard in Mississauga for having sent it to me. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

1320

It's a very simple resolution. I fully support it. I have affixed my signature, and I'm going to ask page Caleb to carry it for me.

#### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a huge number of petitions, with over 3,000 signatures, from the good people of Burlington, who are very concerned about an issue. They have petitioned the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We, the undersigned, strongly oppose the location of a new Niagara-to-GTA transportation corridor passing through the rural area of Burlington, as indicated on map number 3 of the regional official plan amendment 38—draft decision of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing—November 2010, or as shown by the Ministry of Transportation Niagara-to-GTA draft transportation development strategy, June 2010."

I agree with this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I'll pass it to my page, Amira.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails with no public input; and

"Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent; and

"Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders would have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be great; and

"Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened."

This is certified by the Clerk, and my signature is affixed.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from Tom Schmidt from the wonderful community of Strathroy, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Andrew.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I've got close to 1,000 names on a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails with no public input; and

"Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent; and

"Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders would have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be too great; and

"Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional correctional facility can be opened."

I would affix my signature thereto and send it with page Erica.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lock-out; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I shall sign and send this to the Clerk's table.

### TRAVAILLEURS SUPPLÉANTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition that reads pretty much like the one that was just read, so I'll read it in French.

« Attendu que les grèves et les lock-out sont rares; en moyenne, 97 % des conventions collectives sont négociées sans arrêt de travail; et

« Attendu que des lois contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs existent au Québec depuis 1978 et en Colombie-Britannique depuis 1993, et les gouvernements successifs de ces deux provinces n'ont jamais abrogé ces lois; et

« Attendu que la loi contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs a réduit la longueur et la discorde des conflits du travail; et

« Attendu que le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out compromet le tissu social d'une communauté à court et à long terme ainsi que le bien-être de ses résidents; »

Ils demandent « à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter une loi interdisant le remplacement temporaire de travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je vais demander à Jonathan de l'amener aux greffiers.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this, and I will sign it and send it down with Caleb.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have a petition certified by the Clerk and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the HST, effective July 1, 2010, will raise gasoline prices by 8%; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario will collect approximately \$1.6 billion in new tax dollars; and

"Whereas municipalities need access to a greater source of revenue beyond what they collect in property tax;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"While our roads continue to deteriorate and our province's infrastructure deficit is at an all-time high, CAA is asking Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, to dedicate a portion of the HST collected on gasoline and diesel to transportation infrastructure and maintenance."

I have affixed my signature.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I'm very pleased to support this petition. I will put my name and send it up with Erica.

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

"Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

"Whereas many residents of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

"Whereas whatever one-time money that has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to John.

1330

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government must pass Bill 126, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2010, to prohibit the desecration of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerk's table.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I will sign this and send it off with page Erica.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO  
BY REDUCING CONTRABAND  
TOBACCO ACT, 2011****LOI DE 2011 APPUYANT  
LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE  
PAR LA RÉDUCTION DU TABAC  
DE CONTREBANDE**

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act/ Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's an opportunity for the Ontario Progressive Conservatives to discuss what we've in fact been discussing for eight long years on this side the House; that is, contraband tobacco and trying to eliminate it on Ontario streets, particularly illegal contraband tobacco in the hands of children. As I've said, the Progressive Conservative caucus throughout the past eight years has been asking this McGuinty Liberal government to take action on contraband tobacco. I remember first being elected to this place and, with my former colleague, now Senator Bob Runciman, asking diligently in this House why more wasn't being done by this Liberal government on attacking contraband tobacco.

This Liberal government has failed to address illegal cigarettes and the underground economy, they've failed to address illegal cigarettes and their links to organized crime, and they've failed to address underage smoking as a result of contraband tobacco. I can attest that not only Senator Runciman but other colleagues of mine in this chamber have stood very firmly against this practice. I'd like to acknowledge at this point my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk, Toby Barrett, as well as my colleague from Thornhill, Peter Shurman, and of course my other colleague, Garfield Dunlop, from Simcoe North. Through them and the rest of our Ontario PC caucus—I did miss my colleague from York-Simcoe, Julia Munro—we've stood up for eight years.

On the eve of an election, this Liberal government plans to roll out a very weak plan that won't be able to be fully scrutinized before Ontarians go to the polls. In fact, whether or not we decide to pass this legislation before the House rises is another matter. Of course, those of us in the opposition benches don't have any knowledge of when that would be passed, but we find it quite suspect, because as I mentioned on several occasions, members of the Ontario PC caucus have stood up, have indicated this is a very serious issue, have responded to Auditor Generals' reports and have told the government—to keep their feet to the fire—that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, we were not quite sure whether or not it will be addressed in good time.

I can assure you, however, that the Ontario PC caucus will continue to hold this government to account, because

we are concerned about contraband tobacco and the lost revenue it has cost the Ontario treasury and the health effects it has had on Ontario's youth.

Last week, this House had to be suspended for a few moments as a result of comments made by the minister responsible for health promotion. I'm going to quote what she said. In speaking to this bill, she said, "It obviously looks to me like they don't care about Ontario's children." This was a comment made to the opposition benches as it relates to smoke-free Ontario or anti-smoking across our province. I was in the chamber at the time, as were my colleagues from Newmarket-Aurora, Oxford and Halton. We took great offence to those statements. As parents ourselves, as people who want to see public health in our province succeed and accelerate, the comments were not only unwelcome, but they were also quite offensive. It is offensive as well because she tried to say that only the Ontario Liberal Party has spoken up on a smoke-free Ontario. I must admit, not only was it offensive, but I thought it was very disruptive to an orderly debate on this very important topic of illegal and contraband tobacco.

I want to first commend my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, who in 1986 introduced one of the most important pieces of legislation, a private member's bill that would set the stage for Ontario becoming a smoke-free society. Norm Sterling put forward Bill 71, An Act to protect the Public Health and Comfort and the Environment by prohibiting and controlling Smoking in Public Places. Although that did not pass, he did set the stage for what would be a movement not only in this province, but across the rest of Canada and throughout North America, to promote non-smokers' rights above those of those who are smoking.

The member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills has a riding adjacent to my Nepean-Carleton riding. In fact, over his 32-year career, he has represented many of the communities that I represent today. In fact, in my short career, I have represented some of the communities he represents today. About a month ago, I was talking to his first campaign manager, Rich McDonald. Rich is a great, great Conservative. Do you know what he said to me? He said, "Norm has taken enormous risks in his career." The member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills put forward a bill at the time that wasn't popular in our riding, but he did so because he believed it was the right thing to do, which is in stark contrast to what the Minister of Health Promotion said in this House just last week. That's why it's so offensive—because the first person to openly discuss this in a legislative capacity, to make sure that there was one rule for all across this great province, was Norm Sterling.

I'm going to use his own words from that day in 1986. He said, "What we need and what I am proposing in this bill is a uniform minimum provincial standard to deal with non-smokers' rights in the public place and in the workplace. Quite frankly, I am getting a mixed signal from this government"—and of course, he was speaking at the time about what government? A Liberal government.



**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** David Peterson.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** David Peterson, at the time, was the Premier.

He said, "I am getting a mixed signal from this government as to whether there is a commitment to reduce smoking in our province."

My colleague, in 1986, was so far advanced, compared to what this Liberal government is today. He was ahead of the pack, and he's somebody whom I admire.

I also had an opportunity, when I was forced to listen to the Minister of Health Promotion—I was very disappointed, as I know my colleague from Halton was; he was with me in this chamber at the time. It disappointed me because she put words in the mouths of so many members here.

In 2002, my father, who has passed on, worked hard to bring in an anti-smoking bylaw for his small community of 10,000 people, a place called New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Like Norm Sterling's bill, it was not popular; it was not the thing people wanted done in their communities. People were afraid it would close down restaurants and bars and other community places such as bingos, but he believed that it was the right thing to do.

1340

I remember when my father passed—it's almost four years now since he passed of cancer—it was a triumphant moment for us to realize that he had taken that step, that same step Norm Sterling had taken, which was to stick his neck out and understand that he might be going into a place of relative discomfort. You're leading the pack and it's never easy to be a leader, it's never easy to take charge of a situation, but they both did that.

I was very impressed that it was the Conservatives, under Norm Sterling, that first put forward this type of legislation. Of course, in my own city of Ottawa—and I have two colleagues here who sat on the municipal council there as well; however, they're now with the Liberals. They took courageous steps back in 2002 and 2003 as well to ensure that the city of Ottawa was smoke-free.

I remember at the time, people would talk about closing down restaurants, closing down bingo halls. Again, it was the right thing to do and people took a positive stand. I was very proud to have worked with the city of Ottawa's administration at the time, because it was the right thing to do, it would save lives. Ultimately, the same people who would effectively say that this wasn't good legislation would, at the end of the day, I think, agree that we were leading the way not only in small communities like New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, not only in big cities like my city of Ottawa, but right throughout the rest of the world—in New York, in Boston, in Dublin. People were recognizing that this was an important place to go and that's why I have an enormous sense of pride throughout the years that this has been done and people have taken the responsible route.

What wasn't responsible, as you will probably well agree, was the rhetoric that came out of the minister last week, who effectively said that if you don't support every government legislation on anti-smoking, then you

obviously don't care about your children, and that's wrong. As a mother who celebrated Mother's Day with my six-year-old yesterday, I've voted for legislation, whether it's to ban smoking with kids in cars—in fact, whenever I see somebody doing it, it really hurts to see that, that that somebody would not only be, by the way, ignoring the law, but they've put their own child's health in danger. I think sometimes you can't really legislate morality and I think there are a few things that my colleagues have said over time that have been misinterpreted or taken in a different way by the Minister of Health Promotion.

Before I talk a little bit more about where my colleagues have stood over the years on contraband tobacco, I want to talk briefly about the work that some of my colleagues have done, namely my colleague from Simcoe North, who is the correctional services critic. He and I have had an opportunity to discuss this legislation and we're concerned because it appears that the Minister of Revenue is more concerned about this being a monetary issue and not an enforcement issue. We believe this could have been a corrections bill, or it could actually hit a number of different groups. The reality is, we need to provide the police with more enforcement mechanisms so that they can crack down on illegal contraband tobacco, which could be anywhere from \$500 million a year in lost revenue, but it also contributes to organized crime in our communities.

It could also, of course, be a small business issue. As my colleague from York Simcoe will point out time and again, there's lost revenue in the small business sector. We've had many different groups, like the Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association, that have said this is impacting in such a negative way, this contraband tobacco, that it's hurting small businesses across Ontario. I think, too, of my colleague from Thornhill, who has brought this issue up, these illegal smoke shacks, as a blatant example of how people are fighting law and order, and he has brought that up time and time again. Then of course, I think there is the real issue of smoking and what it does to our health care system.

But this government has not done very much. In fact, as my colleague says, and I'm going to quote Garfield Dunlop, "We've actually asked about this for some time now. Over the last seven or eight years, we've asked the government to do more about the contraband cigarettes. Here we are at the 11th hour, five months from the election, and they bring out this bill. We'll never have a chance to test this bill. Even if it was passed tomorrow, by the time you get it implemented, we won't have any idea how it will actually work before the election."

I've got a number of questions. I know that we have raised this in the Legislature since as far back as 2005-06. It's been of grave concern to us, but this government, even after an auditor's report, effectively did not implement any strategies to rid Ontario of this contraband tobacco. We see it from time to time. Whether it's on the borders of Cornwall or other port or international boundaries, we're starting to see these challenges.



I go back to December 2, 2008. My colleague at the time, who's now a senator on Parliament Hill, asked the Premier of the day, Mr. McGuinty, about "the current estimate that your government will run a \$500-million deficit"—jeez, remember when it was only a \$500-million deficit instead of a \$17-billion deficit?—in the fiscal year, and the necessity for putting that added burden on the backs of future Ontario taxpayers. He said at the time, "We recently saw published reports that almost 50% of the cigarettes smoked in Ontario are illegal." He asked at the time, "Premier, can you tell us how much tax revenue you're losing because of the illegal cigarette trade and what steps you're taking to collect it?"

At the time, the Premier referred that question to the Minister of Finance, who did not have an answer. He said, "There's no question that contraband tobacco impacts our revenues." So in 2008 they recognized that it impacted the revenues, but they didn't do anything about it. Here we are in 2011, and we're just starting now to see a bill that focuses more on updating jargon than it does on clamping down on illegal and contraband tobacco.

My colleague then goes on and says, "Any objective observer would have to question this government's commitment to come to grips with this particular challenge. We only have to look at Haldimand county, where illegal smoke shacks are operating with impunity—one, unbelievably, on government-owned land. Talk about rubbing it in your face.

"Minister, you and your colleagues are the 100-pound weakling here. Where's Joe Weider when we need him?... [W]hy would you rather burden future taxpayers with a \$500-million deficit than enforce the law?"

Remember, this is a question that the former member from Leeds–Grenville, a former leader of the official opposition in this House, Senator Bob Runciman, asked the Premier on December 2, 2008. Three years later we see a toothless bill, and my colleague from Nickel Belt will attest, because we were both interviewed for the same article when we were told of these great, new enforcement mechanisms—she was the first to be interviewed, so she was the one that got the quote: Why don't they have them already? If it's illegal, it's illegal.

The police should have the ability to arrest somebody and to confiscate it and to protect Ontarians. Unfortunately for us and for Ontario taxpayers and Ontario patients and Ontario smokers, that's still happening, and there's no real, real law.

But then they went on to start referring not only from the Premier to the finance minister, but then, of course, remarkably, to the Minister of Correctional Services, who chose, might I add, not to put forward a bill in 2008. Now we find it's a revenue bill at last.

But Senator Runciman then reminds this chamber that there was an Auditor General's report in 2008, and it was to say that this government was losing \$500 million a year on illegal tobacco.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** At least.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** At least, in the cigarette trade, as my colleague the Attorney General critic points out. So

we're losing at least \$500 million a year in tax revenue on the illegal cigarette trade. "Some estimates," Mr. Runciman pointed out, "peg that as high as \$1 billion" in illegal activity surrounding cigarettes that are being sold to minors in this province that it took seven and a half years for this government to even notice. They would rather let it go, that \$1 billion or \$500 million, whatever number it ends up being. Whatever that number is, they didn't care, because they didn't want to do anything about it at the time. Now they're bringing this weak bill before us, a bill that offends the sensibilities of constituents who have been calling for real action on illegal contraband tobacco for eight long years. It's very, very shameful.

1350

The reality is, we have people who are breaking the law in Ontario, and for eight long years, the McGuinty Liberals have turned their back against crime that is happening in our communities and is impacting children and youth. At the same time while that crime is happening and children are smoking, and they can afford it because of these illegal cigarettes, the government of our province is losing anywhere from \$500 million to \$1 billion because there hasn't been the leadership on this file to crack down on that illegal activity.

On December 8, 2008, that Auditor General's report came out, and we at the time were so frustrated because we had been asking for years for resolve. The Auditor General pointed out that by adopting their look-the-other-way justice system and ignoring the problem, they were costing us hundreds of millions of dollars—at least \$500 million.

The question we had at the time and I guess the question we all still have on this side of the House is: Why should law-abiding Ontarians put up with the issues we've been dealing with across the way when they're refusing to collect the taxes that we've been owed? Understand it from this perspective: When you have a \$17-billion deficit and the government is completely looking another way at recovering anywhere between \$500 million to \$1 billion and they've looked the other way, yes, that's a revenue problem. It's also a correctional service problem. It's a justice problem. It's an issue that the laws are being flouted in this province, at the risk not only of public health but also of our public revenues and our public services.

So I guess it would, in this 11th hour, explain why this government, right before an election, would want to act: so that they can pretend that they're cracking down on crime, they can pretend that they're going to get all of these lost revenues that they have for so long let squander away; \$500 million a year goes a long way over a period of eight years, as my colleagues would sure point out.

The question then goes back to this: They acknowledged in 2008 that more needed to be done. They pointed out that they were losing hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue problems. The question is, why did we wait until the spring of 2011 to do anything about this bill? They've laid off nurses; they've cut back on family



health teams; they've threatened hospital surgical units, and they had at least \$500 million they could have collected from these illegal smoke shacks and they did nothing.

Regrettably, at the time, several ministers of the crown dating back to that Auditor General's report of December 8, 2008, have stood by and watched and done nothing as kids, as adults, as people across our province were able to buy illegal and contraband tobacco. It's illegal. Something should have been done about it. Regrettably, they lacked any form of concern or expression, and they looked the other way. By the former Minister of Correctional Services' account, on November 1, 2009, some 257,000 cigarettes were seized. On November 26, another 50 cartons of cigars and 2,332 cartons of fine-cut tobacco were seized. They acknowledged at the time, in December, that there was more that they could do. The question becomes: Why does it take so long to get anything done? Why didn't they come back with a strong piece of legislation at the time?

We're now three years after the Auditor General first released his report on illegal contraband tobacco: how much money the province was losing, how many young people were smoking these contraband cigarettes. As our health critic and deputy leader, Christine Elliott, says, it's shocking. In fact, our health critic, Christine Elliott, has been working on this issue as well, because it does impact the health of Canadians and the health of Ontarians. She has spent some time in the great city of Ottawa, as I do, and there was a study done not so long ago—I believe last year—that suggested that most of the cigarettes being smoked at federal government offices in Ottawa were contraband. The reality is, if that's happening, it's not just a lost revenue problem, it's a health problem. But it is also a criminal conduct problem. Why are they letting this occur? It's so frustrating.

I know, for example, that many of my colleagues on this side of the House have asked serious questions. They've debated, to no avail, bills that they believed were serious and would help the public health aspect, the public good aspect as well as the small business aspect. We finally get this bill, and when I sat through part of the briefing—my staff sat through the rest—the only thing we could decipher as being a contribution from this current legislation is that, as my assistant Megan Boyle would say, it updates the jargon from last century to this century.

Also, my colleague Ms. Munro from York-Simcoe has been, I believe, a steadfast opponent of contraband tobacco, and she's been a real champion for small businesses. I want to point out what Ms. Munro has been working on. She said, on September 30, 2010: "Contraband cigarettes are killing small businesses and threatening the livelihood of thousands of convenience store owners. These contraband cigarettes, which are being smuggled throughout Canada in record numbers, now represent one out of every three cigarettes purchased." So while we're talking about \$500 million in illegal trade—and that might be lost taxes—we're also hurting busi-

nesses, because one in every three cigarettes smoked is being purchased outside the appropriate avenues—the legal avenues. So it means that small business owners are being hit.

She asked the minister at the time—actually, she asked the Premier, who referred it—"How does this fit in with your overall plan for economic growth and jobs in Ontario? You say you are concerned, but why won't you take action on illegal" cigarettes? This was a question asked by the member from York-Simcoe last September. And we get from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services at the time, "It's a very important question." Really? I don't think we really needed Sherlock Holmes for that, Minister. We already knew it was a serious problem. We've known it was a serious problem for eight years, but I read it to you again. He said, "It's a very important question."

I'd hate to have him trying to crack the big case in a Nancy Drew book or on CSI; I'm quite certain that the obvious has been hitting him on the head for quite some time.

**Interjection:** Or the Hardy Boys.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The Hardy Boys.

**Interjection:** Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Exactly.

He also says at the time, "It's a very timely question." This was back on September 30, 2010, and it's a timely question: so timely that they would not introduce legislation for another seven months, so timely that they just looked the other way, sat on their hands, twiddled their fingers and did whatever they had to do over a period of time because they weren't interested in getting the job done.

And then, of course, they did what this government is always very good at doing. Guess who they blamed? They blamed the federal government. Somehow they had to blame Jim Flaherty for a problem that wasn't his, but he seems to be the biggest opponent of this government over here. They had to blame the federal government.

So I guess the question is, why? Why can't they put a plan together when most of the illegal cigarette trade is occurring in Ontario? Why couldn't the Ontario government do anything about it? Do you want to know why? Because they felt it was easier to blame the federal government and tell them to put forward a plan than actually implement one of their own.

**Interjection:** Did they blame Mike Harris?

**1400**

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** They didn't blame Mike Harris on that particular issue. However, I think the jury is still out on that. I'm sure they may still have a few more opportunities to do just that.

Let's fast-forward to a year ago, May 4. My colleague Toby Barrett had some questions on illegal tobacco—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could the member refer to the riding rather than the name?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Oh, sorry; Haldimand-Norfolk. He was curious about illegal tobacco. Of course, he, like the rest of us, was concerned about who would answer



the questions over there because it's a bit of a hot potato, but again it does serve so many different ministries when you think about it. It could be the Attorney General that deals with this. It could be the health minister that deals with this. It could be the revenue minister, which, in this case, it is. It could be the correctional services minister. It could be the small business minister. It could be the health promotion minister.

But do you know what the problem is? There are so many different people talking about so many different things, this government has never had a concerted approach on this issue. In fact, do you know what they could have done? This government, had it started to listen to the Ontario PC caucus in the early 2000s—after they formed government—would have provided the Ontario public with a task force that had representatives from each of those ministries to cut down the silos, get the job done, enforce the laws to prevent underage smoking, to prevent the underground economy and to prevent further losses to our revenues, whether that's small businesses. We could have saved all this money, but they chose not to do it.

Again, I walk through some of the different questions that our colleagues have been asking for quite some time. On May 5 of last year, my colleague from York-Simcoe asked the Minister of Consumer Services—yet another ministry in this whole mess that this government has looked the other way on—what steps this government would be taking to protect consumers, particularly those under the age of 19, from the growing threat of illegal tobacco use. What leadership had they shown at the cabinet table for those under 19 who are consumers?

Does anyone want to make a bet who the consumer affairs minister was at the time? It was the current Minister of Revenue. Do you know what she did at the time? She then referred the question, as we've seen, and this is a pattern of behaviour from this government, to the previous Minister of Revenue, who's now the Minister of the Environment. Guess what? Let me tell you this. You're going to be surprised. He too agreed that it was a very important question, and he too agreed that we can all agree that there are people in our society who manufacture and sell contraband tobacco to our children. But did they do anything about it at the time? Did they do anything about it on May 4 or May 5, 2010? No, they did not. They waited over another year after the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus had demanded answers from several different ministers. We asked the Premier, we asked the finance minister, we asked the revenue minister, we asked the correctional services minister, and we asked the government and consumer services minister; not one of them provided us with an answer. Not one of them stood up in their place, not one of them demanded that we increase enforcement against the illegal tobacco trade. Not one of them did that over that eight-year period.

We gave them lots of opportunities. We stood up, we spoke, we asked them, we demanded that they do something for the protection of the children of this province who were smoking. They did nothing.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** No responsibility.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** They took no responsibility, no effort, no action. When we talked about the loss in revenues for this province, whether that's \$500 million or \$1 billion, whatever that number ends up landing on, did they do anything to try and get that money back into the coffers? No, they didn't. We warned them that this was hurting small businesses because the small convenience store owners who have been working night and day, 18-hour and 19-hour days, so they could keep their small business, to feed their families, put their kids through school and heat their homes—when we told them that this was a problem for those small businesses, did they do anything? They did nothing. They waited years to provide us with this very small piece of legislation that changes the name of certain jargon.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** And it doesn't really attack the manufacturers.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It doesn't attack the manufacturers, as my colleague from Halton says. It doesn't do anything to protect the health and safety of children in the health care system, as my colleague from Whitby would tell you. It does nothing to go after those people who are making millions of dollars off of the people, the law-abiding citizens of this province.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** What else are they distributing, those criminals?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It raises a good point. The organized crime component of this, as my colleague from Halton is pointing out, is startling.

Let me go back to taxes for a second, because as I mentioned several times, my colleague from Thornhill has worked diligently on this file. He raised this when no one else wanted to raise it. He would raise it each and every day in the House, demanding answers, and it wasn't happening.

On May 18, he asked a question again about hard-working convenience store owners. They had warned at the time that adding 8% HST on legal cigarettes was “adding gasoline to the fire” that is the illegal tobacco trade, with its 50%-plus market share. It's going to accelerate the number of convenience store closings in Ontario, now at 2,400 in the last two years.” Mr. Shurman said, “This is clear cause and effect. These small business owners are offering a revenue-neutral solution to the mess you've created. Will you give it to them?”

Guess what? Can I just say that who actually answered this question was the Minister of Revenue? Do you know what he said at the time—this was the old Minister of Revenue? That we all agree “what the problem is in contraband tobacco.” They've been agreeing with us for years. Then why haven't they been doing anything about it? We have been asking—a good quarter or maybe 35% of the Ontario PC caucus has stood up daily in this House, if not monthly, to have that conversation, to ask for work to be done, and they've done nothing.

Here's the quote that I talked about when we were talking about Ottawa. I quote the member from Thornhill: “The problem is so out of control, 32% of butts



sampled outside the Department of Finance in Ottawa were illegal themselves, and that's a government building." It's a government building in Ottawa.

He points out that Toronto police chief Bill Blair spoke to him, the member from Thornhill, about illegal tobacco, and that those profits "go directly to buy the guns and the drugs on our streets." The police chief of the city of Toronto told the member for Thornhill that the "profits from illegal tobacco go directly to buy the guns and the drugs on our streets." It goes to the point that the member from Halton just had about the underground economy and the illegal activity: What else is being sold with illegal tobacco? I think it's a good point.

My colleague from Thornhill makes a final point before he asks his question: "It kills small business and it buys the guns that kill innocent people."

It's a serious matter; I think you'll agree, Speaker. Then, of course, you have a minister who doesn't want to point out what can be done; just what can't be done.

My colleague from Halton is here today. He is our Attorney General critic. He continued to carry the torch on this issue, holding this government's feet to the fire back in September of last year, in 2010. He called for a public inquiry into the Caledonia act. He talked about the McGuinty government's lack of response on illegal cigarettes. He said, and I'm going to quote my colleague from Halton, our Attorney General critic: "The consequences? Today, nearly 50% of the cigarettes smoked in Ontario are illegal. An analysis of cigarette butts by the Ontario Convenience Stores Association in 2007 at schools in Brantford showed that approximately 35% of the cigarettes were contraband." I'll just break from his quote. That's eerily familiar to the same percentage that we're seeing in Ottawa outside the Department of Finance around the same period. He goes on to say, "At one school, about 46% were contraband. We have seen an increase in the availability of illegal cigarettes for youth, an increase in funding for organized crime, and an increase in the likelihood that people will experience the serious health consequences of smoking."

1410

My colleague from Halton put forward a very sound argument in less than a paragraph on why more needs to be done on the illegal cigarette trade in Ontario. I have to be honest: I was inclined to support this legislation at the outset, because I believe more needs to be done, but actually, the more we talk about this and debate it in this House, the more disappointed I become and the more I want to call on and ask the government to act further. In fact, I think anything short of a task force on illegal and contraband tobacco outside our schools and what it's doing to small business and what it's doing to the revenue side of things in this Legislature is not enough. I think that they're not doing enough and they should be doing more, and that this legislation is nothing more than a piece of paper that pretends they're doing something about a serious and chronic issue that has occurred right across Ontario that they have neglected for eight long years.

Let me talk a little bit more about what my colleague from Halton said back in September. That would be a good—how many months, member from Wellington—Halton Hills? We're looking at about eight or nine months ago. My colleague from Halton says, "Another consequence has been economic. In 2009 the sale of contraband tobacco saw convenience store operators lose \$2.5 billion in sales." That's a pretty big number. We're talking anywhere between \$500 million to \$1 billion that's lost from government revenues, and my colleague the Attorney General critic from Halton is telling us that in 2009 the sale of contraband tobacco saw convenience store owners lose \$2.5 billion in sales. That number is also eerily familiar to something else called the HST, which is about a \$3.5-billion boon to government revenues.

My colleague does say that the Minister of Revenue should take responsibility for his or her duties, and I would argue that he's right; and not only that, I think the rest of these ministers ought to take responsibility for this issue across our province. He rightfully states that laws aren't being enforced, and then he quotes: "The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services should be committed to ensuring that Ontario's communities are supported and protected by law enforcement and public safety systems that are safe, secure ... efficient and accountable. That is what the website says. As of 2009, policing costs alone accounted for ... \$46 million in Caledonia, yet illegal smoke shops and violence continue unaddressed." I believe that's where it gets very disappointing: We now have seen Caledonia go on for well over five years, we have seen this issue on illegal and contraband tobacco span more years than it ought to have, and we now have a bill in front of us that quite frankly is more technical and administrative than it is substantive on enforcement tools.

That's what's disappointing. In the dying weeks of this Legislature, of this particular Parliament before we go into an election, they've offered us nothing. I think they've offered us a pittance in order for them to be able to go out campaigning in a few weeks to say that they were working on something. Yet I don't really believe they were.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** They keep asking us for our plan.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** What's the plan here, I guess is what my colleague from Halton is saying. Why aren't they doing anything? What's frustrating is that there could be so much more done. They have the majority; they could have done it. They still could. They could step up. They could fight contraband tobacco. They could outlaw this. They could cut smoking rates, bring in the revenue if they wanted. But do you know who's not impressed? The public. The opposition is not, whether that's the Ontario PC caucus—I had a conversation with my colleague from Nickel Belt, who I know is studying her notes very quickly because she is going to be doing her hour lead today. She's about as impressed with this bill as I am; I can tell. I can see it, and she's nodding her head.



I'll go to a Canadian Press story that occurred. As you know, Madam Speaker, frequently in this House we find out in the Toronto Star or through Canadian Press what a bill is going to be. So on a Friday we find out what the legislation will be, because it's leaked by the minister, and then on Monday, we have our five-minute response to a bill we haven't seen yet; however, the press has seen it.

At the time, both myself and my colleague from the third party were quoted in the article "Ontario Police Given Power to Seize Illegal Cigarettes Without Approval." This Liberal government said that they would provide police the power to seize these illegal cigarettes. Apparently, right now, police who spot someone with contraband cigarettes have to call the Ministry of Revenue before arresting them. It took them eight years to come up with that? After questions in this Legislature all the time by members of this Ontario PC caucus, it took them eight years to come up with that, when most people in Ontario actually believed in their heart of hearts in the good faith of government and that that policy would already have been there, that it would already have been legal for the Ontario police to crack down on illegal cigarettes, but it wasn't? And they, through a little piece of administrivia, have decided at the 11th hour, before we go to the polls, that they're going to bring this forward—it's insulting.

Again, as my colleague said at that time—she beat me to the punch, and I'm going to quote her. I'm sure I've never quoted a New Democrat before, but I will do this today. She said, "We're doing some checking to see how much ... power that would be because I was always under the impression that if police saw illegal merchandise of any kind that they were allowed to seize it."

**Interjection:** You would think.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I think that's the question. If police in this province see something illegal, are they not able to seize it? Or do they just have to pick up the phone and call the Ministry of Revenue every single time?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I think that's a secret.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I don't think that's true. I think that's a secret little loophole our colleagues over there have—a secret little loophole; the secret, secret deals and the secret, secret loopholes of this secret, secret government.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It sounds like the G20 all over—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It sounds like the G20, as my colleague said.

What's also offensive is, we're talking about the new fines. Police can issue a ticket on the spot. So if a 15-year-old is walking down the street and he's spotted by the Ministry of Revenue police and he's smoking a cigarette, he could be fined between \$100 and \$500.

However, if it is—

**Interjection:** Call the Minister of Revenue first.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The secret loophole there of the Minister of Revenue.

But it's not bad enough. So this kid could actually get the fine—much like underage drinking, I suppose; how-

ever, it doesn't get to the root of the problem. Where does it say that those people manufacturing these illegal cigarettes are going to pay not \$500 but \$50,000? They're taking revenue out of our hands. They're taking revenue out of legitimate and legal businesses in this province. They're the ones who are putting extra costs on the people who require to go to the health care system as a result of these illegal cigarettes. What do they pay? We're allowing the contraband tobacco, that underground economy, to continue to thrive.

I know I speak on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus in opposing that. We think this government could have done far more, far earlier to do a far better job of protecting not only consumers but particularly those who are underage smokers who should be encouraged to do something differently. But again, this is a government that likes to legislate morality and also a government that likes to play secret games. So what we're seeing right now is a government that has few options.

The law allows for those who import cigarettes into Ontario to register; okay. But I think, perhaps—and I hope it's an unintended circumstance of this legislation—it's what I said earlier: You're going to be making criminals out of smokers who are addicted to tobacco.

**1420**

I think that's the question we all have: Are you going after these 14- and 15-year-old kids with these massive fines to scare them and to encourage them not to smoke? I mean, that's one thing, but really, why are we bullying these kids and not cracking down on the people who are passing millions upon millions—\$500 million around in the illegal trade, and Police Chief Bill Blair is saying that it's going towards drugs and guns. And it's killing small business, but we're going to pick on that 14-year-old.

I think it all goes back to how they've put this little legislative piece together because they were vulnerable, but they've failed to address, as I said in the beginning, illegal cigarettes in the underground economy, they've failed to address illegal cigarettes and the link to organized crime, and they've failed to address underage smoking as a result of illegal tobacco. They've waited until the end of their mandate, with literally weeks left in this legislation, so that this bill will not become law in time for the next Ontario vote.

If this government really believed its rhetoric that tobacco kills 13,000 people a year in Ontario, that we're losing anywhere between \$500 million to \$1 billion in revenues, and that it is costing our health care system approximately \$2 billion annually and furthermore costing our productivity in Ontario \$5.8 billion a year, the question then becomes: Why did it take so long and why is it such a weak response?

I've been able to point out what the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus has been doing effectively since 1986 in trying to slow down the rate of smoking in Ontario. I've talked about what the official opposition in the Ontario PC caucus, under Tim Hudak, John Tory and Bob Runciman, has done and why we continue to hold



their feet to the fire. I've talked about an Auditor General's report that said that we're missing out. I've talked about other reports and studies that have been done that have shown that illegal tobacco is not just found at federal government buildings, outside of the Ministry of Finance, but we've also talked about it being in schools, where our kids are going. If this wasn't serious, I don't know what is. That's why I can't understand for the life of me, nor can my colleagues, why it took so long for this government to put forward this bill.

So much more could be done. That's why I think it's important to go after the real manufacturers of this. That's why I think, with the resources the government has, they could have had a very strong task force and put some serious resources into this to combat contraband and illegal tobacco on so many different fronts.

Beginning, though, it is illegal—as my colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, has pointed out, police in our communities need to be given the resources. As my colleagues from Halton, York-Simcoe and Thornhill pointed out frequently, we need to beef up the tools that our small business owners have in combating this, because they're losing millions upon billions as a result of this. As my colleague from Whitby, our health critic, has pointed out on a number of occasions, people's health is at risk.

I stand here today proud of the work that has been done by the Ontario PC caucus. I am proud that the folks in our communities have stood up and supported our calls for greater action on this issue. We know that teenagers in Ontario and other places in Canada are smoking more contraband tobacco than ever before—and I'll conclude. I have about seven minutes left.

A study was done in 2009 on behalf of the Canadian Convenience Stores Association and the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco. As was reported by Canwest News Service on October 14, 2009, that study found that “30% of cigarette butts collected from around Ontario high schools, and 45% of those collected near Quebec schools, were illegal cigarettes.” Furthermore, “the numbers represent an increase of 4% ... respectively, over last year's study.”

That's alarming. If we're to expect that contraband cigarettes are going to grow by 4% a year in Ontario's schools, this number that I'm quoting right now of 30% has already expanded. Because this government took an extra two years—or, in our view, eight years—to act, that number could be almost 40% now. It could have gone that quickly as a result of this government's inaction.

Gary Grant, a spokesman for the coalition and a retired superintendent of the Toronto Police Service, said, “Almost one in three teenagers are buying cigarettes from criminals, funding further criminal activity, learning that it's okay to break the law, and starting smoking at way too young an age.” That is a former and respected retired superintendent with the Toronto Police Service. How could you get more clear than that?

They were warned two years ago that this was going to be a challenge. We're almost at crisis levels, and this is

what they've done? “Almost one in three teenagers are buying cigarettes from criminals.” It's quite a statement.

The same report says that, “In Ontario, 19,770 cigarette butts were picked up from around 110 high schools ... in May and June” of that year. “Seventeen per cent of the butts collected ... were classified as ‘unknown’ and the others were designated legal or illegal. Illegal cigarettes are those without unidentified brand names, or untaxed brands manufactured on ... reserves.”

The study then further breaks that down in Toronto, and unfortunately they don't have numbers for Ottawa and my community—oh, sorry; they do. I'm going to read it. “In Toronto, about 25,000 cigarette butts were collected at 17 schools and 23% were designated illegal—a 7% increase from 2008. The same rate was found in Ottawa, while in Windsor, it was at 34%”—almost 11 points higher in Windsor than it was in the nation's capital and in the provincial capital.

Where were the members of the government when these studies were coming out? Why has it taken so long? We've been asking for eight years for answers. These issues, in 2009, were quite stark, and it's only two years later that we're seeing anything. And by “anything,” I mean “not substantive.” They could have done so much more, and that's what's so disheartening.

This study continues, and I think this is a pause for members here: “Canada's black market for tobacco is heavily concentrated in Ontario and Quebec and is worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The RCMP, which has a task force to crack down on contraband tobacco, says the links between illegal tobacco and organized crime have increased ‘exponentially’ over the last six years and the market is negatively affecting communities and the economy.” This is from a federal government report. They're saying that our province, the great province of Ontario, has one of the most highly concentrated black markets for illegal tobacco in Canada, and furthermore—and let's read this last statement—“the market is negatively affecting communities and the economy.”

Communities throughout Ontario are being eaten by this terrible bug called illegal and contraband tobacco. “Revenue losses to convenience stores, for example, are reported to be around 30%, according to the RCMP's website.”

Mr. Grant, the former superintendent, says, “You don't see kids standing around their high schools at lunch time with a case of beer between them.... I think that making it a provincial offence to possess cigarettes, as much as it is to possess a bottle of wine, would go a long way to deal with the problem....” He does mention that in this bill, but that's not going to do everything.

1430

I think Rob Cunningham, a senior policy analyst for the Canadian Cancer Society, agrees with where we would go with this: A ban on youth tobacco possession, which is their strategy, shouldn't be the primary strategy. He says, “That ain't going to do it; the key to success to preventing contraband is to target the sources of supply.... In terms of our ‘youth, we don't want to blame the victims.’”



We, in the Ontario PC caucus, believe that we have to get more aggressive on the sources of supply, and we agree with Mr. Cunningham that we have to be more aggressive. That's why I think it's really important that we put measures in place, that we take it seriously and that we crack down on the widespread availability of illegal and contraband tobacco.

Again, in the minute I have left, I want to thank my colleagues in the Ontario PC caucus who have stood up for so long for stronger laws and stronger enforcement against illegal and contraband tobacco. I would specifically like to single out my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, who was thinking about smoking cessation and prevention long before anyone in this chamber was, and I'd like to continue to thank my colleagues who have stood up for enforcement against illegal tobacco and for doing it when this government wasn't listening. I must say that I congratulate them, because I believe they are the reason this bill is before us, however weak it may be.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was a pleasure to listen intently to the previous speaker about how long it took before anything at all was done in this province. Some of the stats that she brought forward are worth repeating. The number of smokers in Ontario is not going down; it is going up. And according to studies that she quoted and that I will quote also, 50% of cigarettes smoked in certain areas of Ontario are illegal tobacco products. We all know this.

She quoted some of the questions and answers that have gone on. The Canadian Cancer Society knows about it, Cancer Care Ontario knows about it, the lung association—they all do. They all wanted a well-coordinated health promotion strategy to deal with this. Unfortunately, all we got was this.

If it is part of a strategy, please tell us—the sooner the better—because if this is it, if this bill is what you're putting out to deal with the issue of contraband in this province, well, let's not waste our time, because this is going to fail.

To make criminals out of 75-year-old ladies who have bought their cigarettes at the same place for the last 10 years—she sees half the Sudbury regional police force buying cigarettes at the same place she is, and all of a sudden not only does she get a fine, but she goes to court for buying her cigarettes where she has been buying them for the last 10 years. This makes no sense whatsoever, but this is what we've got here. And if we think this is a health promotion strategy and that it will do anything—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Ottawa-Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** We've heard from the member from Nepean-Carleton the revisionist history of the Conservative Party's involvement in smoking cessation. I will inform this House that the smoke-free Ottawa legislation was the leader in Ontario, and who was there? Bob Chiarelli; Madeleine Meilleur, a nurse; myself—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you please mention the members by riding?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It was a terrible battle we had on smoking.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** You talked about the smoking history, and that's what I'm addressing, and the new smoking legislation today.

Alex Munter, a brilliant leader, and Rob Cushman, another one way ahead of his field, fought tooth and nail with us, and we won. The Conservatives fought us all the way on the smoke-free Ottawa legislation. When we brought Ottawa's legislation to Ontario, we had McGuinty, Meilleur and myself: I brought 24,000 petitions from students in the Ottawa area and we presented them to George Smitherman at the time. We got the power walls out of retail, and the Conservatives fought us all the way on that legislation. That's now law and that normalization of cigarettes doesn't occur to kids. That's done.

We didn't do everything. Dr. Pipe from the Heart and Stroke Foundation presented me with a plaque in front of city council for the work we did in getting rid of the power walls. The Conservatives fought it all the way.

Smoke-free Ottawa, smoke-free Ontario, the cosmetic use of pesticides, power walls, getting rid of coal—Conservatives have never been on the side of children, never been on the side of children there.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Point of order, member for Nepean-Carleton.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you stop the clock for a minute, please. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This House went into grave disorder last Thursday as a result of the Minister of Health because of the—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order. I can do the ruling myself. Thank you, government House leader.

That, as the member well knows, is not a point of order.

Member from Ottawa-Orléans, continue.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** So we're taking this bill forward. It's probably the last part of the bill. But you mentioned Sterling; what did—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm really pleased to join this debate because I listened very carefully to what my colleague the member from Nepean-Carleton said. It's interesting what the member from Ottawa-Orléans said about not caring about children and so on. If that's the way you think, why didn't you put some teeth into this bill? Why didn't you do something about this to actually



do something other than some very weak enforcement provisions?

This is a really important problem that we've all heard about from various groups, from the cancer society, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Lung Association, various tobacco control groups. It's important from a revenue perspective. We're losing \$500 million to \$1 billion every year in lost revenue because of non-enforcement of these rules. You could almost build a hospital per year on what we're losing in revenue through lack of enforcement and lack of control of the situation by this government.

As for the other issues, it is a justice issue, it is a public safety issue, and most importantly, it's a health issue. I know a lot of people say, "Oh, well, what does it matter? I can go and buy illegal contraband cigarettes from a smoke shack." I bet they wouldn't like to know that their 13-year-old child is buying them from the back of a car somewhere just off their school parking lot. That's what's happening across Ontario. Kids are getting hooked on cigarettes.

I know that the member from Nickel Belt has spoken about this issue many times. That's the reality of what we have to deal with here. We're getting kids hooked at a very young age, and you know the kinds of health problems that we can have that can develop as a result of that. We need to properly deal with this. This bill isn't going to do it. Who's going to say no, they're not going to support it? Of course, anything that's going to move us towards smoking cessation is going to be a positive move.

I know that the anti-smoking groups want us to support it, but it really has to be said that you're not really doing anything effective about this. You're not doing anything to control the illegal flow of contraband cigarettes, you're not doing anything to prevent adults from accessing them from illegal smoke shacks, and you're certainly not doing anything to prevent children from having access to illegal cigarettes that they can buy from the back of somebody's car in a plastic shopping bag.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This is a very serious subject matter, and I'm disappointed that people would trivialize it by politicizing it in the manner that we've witnessed here today.

Tobacco addiction is a serious problem in this province and this country, a serious problem. We've made some headway. I reflect on the incredible role that my colleague Shelley Martel, when she was then the member for Nickel Belt, played in developing the framework that we have now, and of course the important role being played by our current health critic.

I listened to the comments of the member from Nepean—Carleton. She made a very competent, capable contribution to the debate and she raises, amongst other things, this obvious observation that all the legislation in the world comes to naught if you don't have enforcement. The enforcement has been an issue in this House

for a good chunk of time now in question period and over the course of debates, and this government—and addictions, please.

I just happened to have been on chapter 4 of that Norman Doidge book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, the chapter that's about addictions. It's a very readable book. I appreciate the author for making it readable.

**1440**

This government just passed, in its budget, the legislative structure for Internet gambling, the most addictive form of gambling that could ever be created—one that is impossible to monitor, one that will attract younger and younger gamblers. I'm talking about kiddie gamblers, kids blowing up mom's or dad's credit card in the privacy of their own bedroom in front of their computer screen. You talk about some neuroplasticity and some redesign of brain structure to create hardcore gambling instincts? You do it with Internet gambling. So this government doesn't have very much credibility when it comes to the addictions file, does it?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Nepean—Carleton has up to two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Again, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their contributions in the debate.

I think the record of the Ontario PC caucus on this particular issue of contraband tobacco speaks for itself. I'm very proud of the contributions that my colleagues have made in holding this government's feet to the fire. I'm also extraordinarily proud of my colleague from Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

If people want to remove themselves from revisionist history, I would encourage the member from Ottawa—Orléans to look at the bill. It took great courage. I can tell you why I know it took great courage: because my own father, before he himself died of cancer, fought to make his small community a smoke-free environment, and it came at a dear political price. I remember him having to ask their town council at the time in 2002 to postpone a meeting because he wanted to vote for it, and my uncle, who was never a smoker, was dying of lung cancer at the time.

This government has debased itself on this issue by calling into question the love and strength of character that we have in the opposition for our own children. I'm disgusted by them. I can't believe that not only the minister but the member from Ottawa—Orléans would utter such contemptuous words. They've chosen to debase and devalue this debate, and they've done it to fearmonger and scare people.

We believe, in the opposition benches—and I believe I speak with my colleagues in the third party—that we need to do a heck of a lot more to fight illegal and contraband tobacco. We have stated very clearly that this goes through several different ministries. We believe you could have done a better job. In fact, if you look at the record over the past eight years, you could have.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?



**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Certainly the NDP supports strong tobacco controls. We take tobacco and its health effects very seriously. But we also know that tobacco control is a complex balancing act.

Let's talk a little bit about how serious tobacco and smoking addiction is in Ontario. Evidence shows us that most Ontarians agree that smoking is dangerous. We know this, and most smokers would like to quit. However, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario. Remember when we talk about the escalating cost of health care services and how it's eating up 50% of our budget and all of this? Well, right here, right now, we could prevent a lot of disease from happening. We've all known this for a long time, and very little is being done.

The prevalence of smoking in Ontario has stopped declining, and among certain populations, it is increasing. Do you want to know who those populations are? The youth: the next generation of smokers.

We all know that 13,000 Ontarians die each year, directly related to their tobacco use. That's one person every 40 minutes. While I do my speech, an Ontarian will die, and another one will be on their way to dying also, because every 40 minutes, every day of every week of every month, somebody dies because of tobacco use. Yet we still have 2.1 million smokers in Ontario.

Unfortunately, we have to add to the 2.1 million smokers the 200,000 people who use smokeless tobacco products, mainly youth who use those flavoured chews. Baseball season is about to start. It doesn't matter where you go in Ontario; you will see those chews on every bench, and most of the kids, the young players, use them.

The highest rate of smoking, by age, is for men and women aged 20 to 29. Although we say that 19% of Ontarians smoke, 37% of men who are 24 years of age and over smoke, and it's 27% for ages 20 to 24. Think about it: 34% of men aged 25 to 29 smoke. This is the next generation of smokers. Stats are not going down in Ontario anymore; they're going up.

The tobacco industry—and when I say the tobacco industry, I mean both the legal and the illegal—persists as the supplier of products responsible for the leading cause of preventable disease and death among Ontarians. Tobacco is the only legal product that, when used as intended, kills half of its users prematurely, and it also kills other people through their second-hand exposure. Think about it: We have a product right here in this province that, if you use it as you're supposed to—because sometimes, with drugs and interactions, things happen, but not with this one. With this one, it's not a side effect. If they use it as intended, half of the people will die prematurely. Try and make sense of that now.

As I said, the industry is very adept at finding new customers and new ways to market and distribute their products. They have no choice, because every 40 minutes they lose a customer, because every 40 minutes a tobacco user dies. They have to replace that tobacco user. Otherwise, it affects their profit margin.

Nicotine, which is present in all tobacco products, whether or not they are smokeless, is a very addictive

substance when smoked or chewed as a tobacco product. The addiction to nicotine has often been compared to heroin or cocaine addiction, making it one of the toughest to break. Unlike cocaine and heroin suppliers, suppliers of tobacco products to Ontario markets are treated as mainstream business, and this has to change.

In 2005, when the smoke-free strategy was implemented, the government increased the funding, that was at \$10 million, and increased it to \$60 million—this is when it peaked in 2008. But although we saw in 2008 that the trend that had started to go down started to go back up, the investment in a smoke-free Ontario did not go up. It started to go back down.

Ontario spends about \$3.29 per capita, or \$42 million a year, on a smoke-free Ontario. It used to be \$60 million a year, but it has gone down. What a short-sighted savings. For every dollar we invest in prevention, we automatically directly get \$3 back, just in our health care system—never mind the pain and suffering and the economic impact. The relationship has been studied to death: \$1 of prevention is a \$3 saving in our health care system.

1450

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the spending on tobacco control. For a jurisdiction the size of Ontario it should be \$8 to \$13 per capita, which would bring us to about \$100 million. We're not even at half of this.

There is wide-ranging support for limiting tobacco use. We see that 61% of Ontarians agree that smoking should be banned from patios, but we're not doing it; 78% of parents agree that they should not smoke at home if there are children living there. We're not doing anything about that either. Some 48% agree that smoking should not be allowed in parks, and 41% agree that smoking should not be allowed on sidewalks. We have to denormalize tobacco use, but we see none of that in the bill.

What happens to our health care costs? Tobacco products are the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario and are responsible for \$6 billion in economic and health care costs—\$6 billion. That would go a long way toward bringing resolution to a lot of problems that we're facing. This is a lot of money. Although we get \$1.6 billion in tax revenue from tobacco and tobacco use, we spend \$6 billion. It doesn't make sense. If you gain \$1.6 billion by taxing the tobacco products but end up paying \$6 billion, that's four times what you pay compared to what you collect, not taking into account how bad those products are. We add \$4.4 billion in lost productivity and 500,000 hospital days.

You know all of those hospitals out there that are struggling with ALC, backups in emergency rooms, cancelled surgeries and delays? Just think of what 500,000 hospital days would do to those hospitals. All of a sudden, you would have beds to admit your people to. All of a sudden, you wouldn't have off-loading delays in our emergency departments and those long wait-lists because you can't admit any more people.



Do we have a comprehensive health promotion strategy to tackle tobacco? No; we have Bill 186, this tiny weenie little punitive shot at trying to fix a problem that is so much bigger than that. If we want the strategy to be effective, it must be based on public education, it must be based on community input, and it must have buy-in. We have none of this with Bill 186. We must work with First Nations to find solutions that will work for all in every community. We don't see any of this.

Actually, the first thing we saw, the minute this bill was out the door, was two associations of First Nations that decried the fact that they were never consulted. They were told that they were going to be consulted, but they were not. The first one out the door—seconds after we found out that Bill 186 was being tabled—was the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. They had had meetings with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, with the OPP commissioner and with a number of other people regarding First Nations tobacco products. They were promised that Ontario intended on circulating a discussion paper/proposal to begin resolving issues surrounding First Nations tobacco products. Those people, in good faith, who sat with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis, Deputy Minister Lori Sterling of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Deputy Minister Steve Orsini from the Ministry of Revenue—they were all there. They all promised them that they would be circulating a discussion paper, that they wanted a dialogue with First Nations regarding First Nations tobacco products.

What happened? Nothing happened. This discussion paper was never circulated to them. It still, to this date, has not been circulated, and they were notified of Bill 186 by the Minister of Revenue the morning that she tabled the legislation which stands in direct opposition to what had been discussed. There is a part of the bill that talks about First Nations engagement. If you have already started a dialogue, if you've already promised a paper in a discussion—a document—and you go ahead and bring legislation without them having had a chance to see it, this is not a very good way to start a relationship. This is not a very good way to have an engagement process take place when we all know—and it's in the bill—that there needs to be community engagement from the First Nations.

They, as everyone else, mentioned that the legislation itself is finely focused on punitive actions, and this is not what the First Nations want. Let me tell you what those punitive actions will look like. It will look like Aunt Lou Ellen—but I call her Aunt Lou—who is close to 80 years old, has smoked two and a half packs a day all of her life and goes to Atikameksheng Anishnawbek in my riding and buys her cigarettes there. She buys them there like 50,000 smokers in Sudbury do every single week and every single month.

I would say probably half of the smokers from within the Sudbury Regional Police also go there to buy their cigarettes. For everybody, this is the norm. This is not illegal. It is done in front of everybody. They advertise it.

You go into a store, you buy your cigarettes, you pay for them, and then all of a sudden she will be charged. The first time, if she has less than 200, she will be charged \$100, plus she will pay three times the tax. Quick math here: She will be charged about \$175 for something when she doesn't even have a clue that she is doing something illegal.

Heck, she smoked her two and a half packs for, what, 70 of her 80 years on this earth? Nobody has ever said anything to her, that she was doing something wrong, because she sure is a church-going, law-abiding citizen, but she doesn't know, and neither do most of the people in my riding. I mean, it's obvious. It's out there. It has been out there for a decade. You go in, you see the stores, you pay and you go back with your cigarettes.

That's not all. If she gets caught at the other place that sells illegal cigarettes, not only will she be fined, but—she doesn't get a ticket or anything like this. What happens is that she now has to go to court. Can you imagine this? Do you know how many elderly smokers I have in my riding? My riding is way higher than the percentage in the rest of the province. A lot of them are very elderly. They have no idea that they're breaking the law. I can just see them lining up in court because they've done something they didn't even know was illegal. And God forbid you do this in one place and you go back on the northern side of my riding and buy cigarettes there, too. You could end up in jail. Aunt Lou doesn't want to go to jail for something she doesn't even know is wrong, but this is what this bill is all about: punitive action.

Coming back, we have this part of the bill that talks about engagement with the First Nations. The first group, the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, were not the only ones who were not consulted. We also had the Chiefs of Ontario come out against the bill.

#### 1500

The Iroquois say: "Bill 186 must be halted to accommodate proper consultations and negotiations with First Nations. It is essential that a win-win solution is identified and reflected in the legislation before the bill proceeds any further in the Ontario Legislature."

Now quoting from the Chiefs of Ontario, the Chiefs of Ontario see this bill exactly the same way. The legislation is "a punitive action rather than tobacco use reduction strategies.... There are many outstanding issues regarding jurisdiction, economic development and trade that should have been discussed with First Nations leadership beforehand."

They go on to say, "For a government that prides itself on consultation and transparency this lacks the goodwill that must underpin a successful working relationship.... it is appalling that the province would proceed with this initiative."

This comes from the Chiefs of Ontario, which is a political confederacy of the chiefs within the district of Ontario, and they conclude by saying that they oppose Bill 186. "The Chiefs of Ontario is a political coordinating body for the 133 First Nation communities located within the boundaries of the province of Ontario."



How can we get this off the ground so poorly? How can it be that we have all known for years that this is an issue, we've all been asking for action, we've all known that to be successful you need a win-win and you need to make sure that every community, including First Nations communities, is on board, and we come out with this?

Let's be serious here. There are 12 sessional days left in this Parliament and then it's all over. Why is it that 12 days before the end of this Parliament, we're facing legislation on such an important issue? You've heard the statistics that I've read: the 2.1 million people, the cost to society, the death every 40 minutes, the cost to our health care system alone. And yet here we are, 12 days before the end of this Parliament, discussing a bill that lacks the basic foundation for success.

Do work up front. Do your homework before you come out with a bill. Bring forward a well-coordinated health promotion strategy and then we will move forward on something. It's not like a well-thought-out strategy doesn't exist: We have, right here, Building on Our Gains—because smoke-free Ontario has made some significant gains. Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now: Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy for 2011-2016 is the report from the tobacco strategy advisory group to the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport and it's dated October 18, 2010.

We have a road map, and not just any road map. If you look at the experts who sat on this, this is a who's who of all of the top minds in Ontario when it comes to this issue. It was co-chaired by Dr. George Pasut, VP of science and public health, Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. There is John Atkinson, manager of health promotion for the Ontario Lung Association; Dr. Francoise Bouchard from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health; Donna Czukar, who is from the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division; Rosa Dragonetti, who is from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Dr. Roberta Ferrence, who is from the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit; Lori Flynn, from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres; Lorraine Fry, from the Non-Smokers' Rights Association; Dr. John Garcia, from the faculty of applied health sciences from the University of Waterloo; Dr. Doris Grinspun, who is the executive director of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario; Dr. Beth Henning, from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health; Dr. Robert Kyle, medical officer of health for the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health; Dr. Hazel Lynn, from the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health; Dr. Heather Manson, director, chronic disease and injury prevention, Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion; Michael Perley, who everybody has quoted so far, from the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco; Rowena Pinto, from the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division; Cindy Shcherban, from the Ontario Lung Association; Linda Stobo, from the London health unit; Laura Syron, from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario; Carol Timmings, from the Ontario Public Health Association; and John Wellner, from the Ontario Medical Association.

All of those people reviewed the evidence, reviewed the research, and put forward a strategy—a strategy that is not based on the punitive action that is contained within this bill; a strategy that basically wants to reduce the supply of legal or illegal tobacco products, but also reduce the demand for Ontario products. They put forward a 43-page document that's easy to read, that anybody would understand. It's a road map.

The Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport asked this panel to get together, supported this panel's work so that we could get the report. Yet when the time came to receive it, what was the first thing that came out of the mouth of the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport? I would expect, "I'm so happy with the report. We've done great work with smoke-free Ontario. We're ready to move on." But what did she say? She said that they have no intention of introducing further work on tobacco. We have just asked the who's who of all of the top minds of this province about how to put together a comprehensive, robust health promotion health strategy that would give the results that we want; that is, decreasing the number of smokers in Ontario, protecting the health of Ontarians. They laid it out in 43 pages. And what did the minister say? "No, thank you. I don't want any of this. Instead, I'm going to move forward with a bill that is a revenue bill, that has the catchy name of talking about illegal tobacco but that has zero potential for success."

A good health promotion strategy is never anchored on one pillar of being punitive. This is a non-starter. We're not going to help Ontarians stop smoking that way. We may have the odd success here and there. If Aunt Lou has to go to court or is thrown in jail, I suppose she'll have to stop smoking, but this is a heck of a social price to pay to get Aunt Lou to stop smoking. I would say, how about a good health promotion strategy instead, that would support her rather than punish her? But that's not what we've got. We've got Bill 186, a Ministry of Revenue bill that deals with an issue as important as what we have now.

#### 1510

Tobacco control requires more than a punitive approach. It must offer a range of appropriate regulations, enforcement tools and public education campaigns. It must do the hard balancing act of working with people who have a tobacco addiction while you cut off tobacco supply. One cannot come ahead of the other. It's like the cart-before-the-horse story. This is what we're trying to do right now.

The NDP has called for action on contraband tobacco for a very long time. I don't like it when I see smoking trends going up in my province. I know exactly where this will lead. This will lead to an oncology unit in one of our hospitals, in cancer treatment centres, to somebody who will go through hell. Have you ever seen somebody dying of lung cancer, Madam Speaker? It is not a pretty sight. I don't want anybody to have to go through this, ever. But every 40 minutes in Ontario, a person dies of tobacco use. It's not a nice death at all. I will spare you the details, but I'm sure some people have seen—we've



all known somebody who has had lung cancer due to cigarette smoking. If it's not in our direct family, it's our uncles or aunts or friends or neighbours or co-workers. And the last couple of weeks and the last couple of days and the last couple of breaths are not easy.

Why wouldn't we want to put something forward that would prevent all of this from happening? Nope; we are putting a punitive approach. That's the strategy in Ontario. And not only are we doing this, but we're doing this when there are 12 sessional days left—actually, 11 and two hours and 45 minutes left—in this Parliament. Hmm.

As I mentioned, we heard instantly from First Nations that due diligence had not been done, that they had not had a chance to give input, that this bill was being rushed through. How could we rush something like this? The Liberals have been in power for eight years. They've known about illegal tobacco for eight years. They've known about the stats and they've had the research and the knowledge for eight years. And here we are, 12 days to the end, with this bill, a punitive approach. I couldn't be more disappointed.

I'm also very concerned. How come we're not getting a well-researched bill? How come the community engagement didn't get done? How come we don't have a full strategy? Maybe the punitive aspect would make sense if we were to see a comprehensive strategy, but we don't see any of this. We only see this bill, Bill 186, the letdown of a bill. Hmm.

When the NDP were in power, we introduced the first comprehensive cancer strategy for Ontario. It was a full strategy that looked at health promotion, disease prevention, primary, secondary, tertiary prevention. It looked at treatment. It looked at palliative care. It looked at support for the caregiver. It was a strategy that made sense from the beginning to the end.

I myself co-sponsored a private member's bill—with the member from Brant, actually—that banned the sale of single-packaged flavoured cigarillos, which were the cigarettes of choice for the next generation of smokers; that is, for youth who were picking up those cigarillos at a buck apiece, and they would become the next generation of smokers. We were successful in having that bill go through, and those cigarillos are now illegal in Ontario. But no sooner did the bill go through than the tobacco industry bounced right back with a whole array of new flavoured tobacco products directly targeting the next generation of smokers, directly targeting our youth and making sure they got addicted to nicotine—the sooner the better. Remember, they lose a client every 40 minutes, because every 40 minutes, a tobacco user dies in Ontario, so they need to get to work at it.

I've introduced another private member's bill that would ban all flavoured tobacco products, whether you smoke them or they're smokeless, all of those, chews, all of the new products. Frankly, why don't we see a ban on new tobacco products? Nobody's addicted to the new ones; they haven't been invented yet. Wouldn't that be easy? Wouldn't that be a step in a health promotion

strategy? But no, we got Bill 186, punitive measures in a nowhere land of a health promotion strategy.

New Democrats have stood up in the Legislature many, many times as this government cut important programs under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. When I saw the cuts to an innovative youth-led peer anti-smoking program, I opposed it with everything that I could. It was a good pillar of a health promotion strategy. It had youth talking to youth about not picking up the habit. It had youth talking to youth about quitting the habit. And it was working great; it was working great in my riding. We had a group of francophone students, a group of aboriginal students, a group of anglophone students. They were all engaged. They were getting results. It was working so well that the government cut funding. We're talking minimal funding here because they were all volunteers. We paid for their bus tickets and the odd sandwich if they met at night. That was a very small amount of money and that was taken away.

That's the pound-foolish and penny-wise kind of—I don't know how it works, but it makes no sense. To have saved those few pennies, it will cost us hundreds of millions of dollars of treating those youth who are picking up the habit because they will end up the same way as 50% of tobacco users end up: having their lives shortened and dying because of their use of tobacco. But this is our Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport for you, Madam Speaker: When we see a good idea, we nip it in the bud. Instead, what do we do? We introduce a revenue bill to deal with the tobacco addiction. Where is the sense in that?

To make matters worse, the history of smoking is nothing short of tragic. It is tragic because five million people lose their lives each year from it. It is tragic because by 2025, at the rate we're going now, it will be 10 million people a year who will lose their lives in Canada. Most of us have lost a parent, a friend, a brother, a sister or even a child to cancer from tobacco use. We know the pain and the emotional suffering. Most of all, we know the tragic waste of human life.

I will always remember when we had recruited Dr. Cunningham, who was the first oncologist who came to what is now Sudbury Regional Hospital, but at the time it was called Laurentian Hospital. We had the first oncology unit. We didn't have a cancer treatment centre at the time. I guess I'm dating myself. It must be 26 years or 27 years ago. I volunteered to be on the first interdisciplinary team for the oncology unit. The success rate was not very high. We saw lots of cancer patients. We saw lots of lung cancer patients who came to the oncology unit and died—not an easy death.

I'll always remember this young woman, a single mom with a three-year-old. She kept her baby with her through the whole ordeal, and, man, was she sick. If she threw up once a day—she threw up 25 times a day. She was really, really sick through the whole thing. But she kept her daughter with her, and she died. She died of lung cancer. I remember holding the three-year-old child, watching her mother die, and the CAS came and got her.



From that day on, I told my supervisor, "I want out of the oncology unit. I can't take this anymore," and she was good enough to get me out of there. It is no fun at all to watch people die of lung cancer. They suffer a lot, and they all wish they had had an opportunity to quit.

1520

We have this opportunity right here, right now. We have an opportunity to put together a good health promotion strategy. Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now: Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy—It's all in there. It tells us how to make sure we reduce the supply while we reduce the demand. It recognizes that the use of tobacco products remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death, that 2.1 million people still smoke, and that we need a new five-year plan for making Ontario tobacco-free. It sets reasonable expectations and goals for us to work on.

They basically put this expert panel together. The expert panel reviewed and discussed the changes in the tobacco control environment and put forward recommendations—recommendations that are broad-based.

They start with their vision statement: "A tobacco-free Ontario by 2030." A tobacco-free Ontario by 2030: Could you imagine what that would do? That pain and suffering that I saw would all be gone—no more. All of those people dying of lung cancer or—tobacco doesn't only give you lung cancer; it affects most of your organs and most of your systems as well. So whether you talk about high blood pressure or many other organic diseases, they are directly linked to the use of tobacco.

They start by saying, "Governments have an obligation to protect the health of the people they serve." Each and every one of us in this House has an obligation to protect the health of the people who elected us. We have an opportunity to put forward, building on smoke-free Ontario, a new strategy that will get us tobacco-free by 2030. The document is here. It's on the website. Anybody could read it, if they cared to, and so could the government. They paid for it; they commissioned it. And they came out with Bill 186, a revenue bill that is a punitive bill, that has none of the pillars of health promotion and none of the pillars of disease prevention in there. That's all it does.

"A renewed tobacco control strategy must:

"—continue to build on the comprehensive tobacco control approach established by the smoke-free Ontario strategy;

"—address both the supply of and demand for tobacco products simultaneously in order to weaken the relationship that maintains and supports the use of tobacco products"—and we're not seeing anything simultaneously happening here;

"—go beyond smoking cigarettes to address the use of all tobacco products, including smokeless products; and

"—take a 'whole of government' approach."

We don't see any of this in Bill 186.

The smoke-free Ontario strategy that was implemented in 2004 did a lot of good things. It set things in motion that helped us decrease the amount of smokers in

Ontario by 20%. Why don't we build on this? The problem with the first strategy is that "it did not significantly address the primary cause of tobacco-related disease and death," which is "the continued availability of tobacco products to men, women and children in Ontario."

We all realize that a tobacco-free society cannot be established or accomplished overnight, but we can plan for it now so that we are ready for 2030.

We have to stop treating the tobacco industry as a normal, legitimate industry, because it is not. Tobacco products are so ingrained in our culture right now that we see them as a normal part of our society. We see them as a normal part of our economy. How do we see this? Believe it or not, tobacco production has been subsidized by government, it has been glamorized by the tobacco industry and it has been an important source of revenue for the government and small business, largely due to decades of tobacco industry incentives to retailers. It is time to denormalize and delegitimize the tobacco industry.

The fact that contraband has become a significant source of cheap tobacco products in Ontario should be a call to action, because it undermines all other efforts to reduce tobacco use, especially among young people. But do we see any of that? Nothing. We see Bill 186, a Ministry of Revenue bill that will punish people. Not the right way to go.

The tobacco industry will tell you, and try to create the myth, that tobacco use is a lifestyle choice. It isn't. Let's call it what it is: It's an addiction, pure and simple. The tobacco industry says, and I quote John Clayton, vice-president of corporate affairs for Imperial Tobacco, from a news release from last year: "We make a legal product for adult consumers who have made a choice to continue smoking in spite of the known risks."

Well, how many communications spin doctors did he consult before he spit that out? Smoking is an addiction, pure and simple, no ifs, no buts. It is not a choice; it is an addiction.

The addiction to tobacco takes away any choice the consumer has not to use tobacco products. Nicotine is too addictive to treat it any other way. If we want people to stop smoking, we have to give them the support they need to overcome their addiction to tobacco. Giving them the fines, bringing them to court and throwing them in jail if they're repeat offenders is not helping them with their addiction to tobacco. It's making criminals of people who have an addiction issue.

Many of the people in this House spent 18 months with me on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. In none of our recommendations will you see, "Put people with addictions in jail." This is not a solution. "Give a fine to people with addictions." This is not a solution either.

This is not how you deal with people with addictions. You give them support, and this is what the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions wrote in their report. We need a better system of support, we need a basket of services, we need a whole bunch of recom-



mentations—23 of them, to be precise. None of them said, “Punish them, give them fines, put them through the courts and put them in jail.” This is not the solution, but this is what Bill 186 tells us we’re going to do.

A comprehensive approach is the only effective means of protecting and promoting the health of Ontarians with regard to tobacco use. The recommendations have to be synergetic, so that we strengthen a comprehensive tobacco control strategy. We have to do both: We have to decrease the demand and the supply of legal or unregulated tobacco products.

1530

Right now, in Ontario, we spend \$42.8 million. That is reduced. It used to be \$60 million. It needs to be brought back up. It needs to be brought back up to \$100,000 a year so we meet the criteria where, for every dollar invested, we get \$3 back directly in savings from our health care system. How do we do this? Sure, there will be some enforcement, but there’s also big public awareness that needs to happen.

I was talking about the tragic history of tobacco smoking. We’ve known for over 60 years now that smoking kills, and we’re still battling with 2.1 billion smokers in Ontario. For the whole time that this government has been in power, they’ve known that illegal tobacco is an issue that needs to be addressed in this province, and when they finally come out with something that addresses it, it misses the mark. No matter how you want to look at this, it misses the mark. It’s not going to be successful. By trying to solve a social problem, it will create 12 new ones. It has to be part of something bigger in order for this to work.

As a society, we have let tobacco companies continue to promote and sell cigarettes as desirable products. They are not. They have to be delegitimized. It has taken this government their entire mandate, eight years minus the 12 sitting days left in this Parliament, to bring something forward. We’ve done too little to stop the epidemic of death and disease left in the wake of tobacco use.

We in the NDP support action on contraband tobacco, but let’s not forget that large, profitable tobacco companies that are so responsible for bringing us to the situation that we are in now. Because tobacco will continue to kill 13,000 Ontarians a year and most of them, 85% of lung cancers, are directly linked to tobacco smoking. It will continue to cost Ontario taxpayers \$6.1 billion in health care costs, premature death, disability and other factors, when we have in front of us a strategy to deal with this.

In the report *Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now*, they talk about reducing consumption by 20% within the next five years. They have set a list of targets and outcomes with a plan of action that is achievable. None of this, none of their recommendations, none of their targets we see in this bill. They want to reduce the percentage of Ontarians who smoke. They call it “five over five,” a decrease of five percentage points over five years in the number of Ontarians who use tobacco. That would be 490,000 fewer Ontario smokers.

They have a target of protection from second-hand smoke, with the outcome that we’d be banning smoking on all bar and restaurant patios. We already ban it in bars and restaurants. We would now extend it to the patio.

They want to help Ontario smokers to quit, and they put targets on this. They want to increase the proportion of smokers who attempt to quit. It’s now at 9.4%; let’s increase this to 21%. Also, let’s increase the percentage who are successful.

They want to decrease the number of youth who try tobacco. Right now, although it is illegal for them to smoke, youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are picking up smoking more than ever before, in part because of the availability of cheap cigarettes through the illegal market. They want to decrease this by 0.5% a year.

Regarding the industry, they want to reduce the supply of tobacco products with the introduction of new tobacco products legislation, except when it is for therapeutic use.

Under the targets of health benefits—keeping more Ontarians healthy—you decrease tobacco-related disease, measured in terms of total acute hospital care days attributed to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, better known as COPD, lung cancer, stroke, and IHD and pneumonia, by 6.5%. That would give you 204,493 days less of hospital admission.

Why is it that when we have this strategy in front of us that is well documented, well researched and signed by all of the who’s who in Ontario’s health care system, First Nations, cancer—everybody who knows and recognizes what a good health promotion strategy is all about. When we have this document in front of us, why is it that we come out with a revenue bill to deal with this issue? We need a comprehensive tobacco health promotion strategy. It is there for us to implement. Yet, the government comes out with Bill 186.

What they want to do—I see that I’m running out of time. They want to denormalize and delegitimize the tobacco industry. This is an important step. They talk about things like divesting provincial pension plans and other investments of tobacco holdings. Did you know that Ontario universities and hospitals have invested into the tobacco industry? Wouldn’t it be a good idea to put our money someplace else?

We talk about preventing the tobacco industry from interfering in the settlement and implementation of tobacco control policies. Wouldn’t it make sense, if you’re trying to curb this habit, that you listen to health promotion and Cancer Care Ontario ahead of Imperial Tobacco, and also, to put together a quick response team of key public health, government and NGO leaders, because we know that the tobacco industry is very quick whenever there is a legislative change?

We had the example when the cigarillo bill came through. Within a month they had come out with a whole bunch of flavoured tobacco products and a slightly bigger cigarillo that just made it over the bar not to be called a cigarillo, but that they continued to sell in the same manner as before, in the same flavours as before, to make sure that they hook this next generation of smokers.



They also want to deal with the package price, placement and promotion. What would that mean for the tobacco industry? That would mean no more flavoured tobacco products. Once you're hooked, you don't want the green apple-flavoured and the martini-flavoured or the chocolate-flavoured tobacco anymore; you want the nicotine. You've got your addiction, and that's all you want.

The only reason they come out with flavoured tobacco is because people that don't smoke don't really care for the taste of tobacco. So they flavour it until they have you addicted. Once you're addicted to the nicotine, you ditch the chocolate flavour and the martini and all the rest of those flavours—there's 33 flavours, if you're interested, in my riding; I counted them—and you go for the nicotine.

1540

Let's ban this. Let's ban flavouring in smokeless tobacco and ban smokeless tobacco altogether. Let's force them to use plain and standardized packaging and prohibit the sale and marketing of any new tobacco products. It is hard to limit right now because people are addicted. But nobody is addicted to new products that don't exist. Let's ban them. Let's make sure there are no new products introduced in Ontario when it comes to nicotine and tobacco.

Price is such an important factor to attract youth, and it also decreases the incentive for smokers to quit. Establish a minimum retail market price for tobacco products—an idea that's worth looking into. Implement a substantial increase in the taxes. Empower the municipal police. Establish joint operation groups. Have markings on every cigarette. Lay the groundwork for proactive activities and stop the sale of tax-exempt tobacco to ineligible individuals.

They go on to talk about placement. Reduce the availability of cigarettes to underage youth. Require that tobacco manufacturers meet annual reductions in the number of underage tobacco users in Ontario. Make it their responsibility that this number decreases, rather than what it's doing right now, which is increasing.

Under promotion, put the 1-800 cessation helpline on every package, and continue your advertising so that you support the 1-800 helpline. Decrease the visibility of smoking, smokers and exposure on patios, in front doorways and in outdoor sport and recreational spaces, using awareness-raising tools. They make some suggestions regarding the movies: Where tobacco is used as imagery, make them 18 and over.

They talk about creating the task group of key partners that I talked about. They talk about changing the social norm related to tobacco products.

But I see that I'm running out of time. We have a bill in front of us that is a revenue bill that deals with a very, very serious issue: the addiction of 2.1 million Ontarians to tobacco. Punitive strategies are not good health promotion strategies, have never been and will never be. We haven't got a new health promotion strategy for tobacco. This needs to change.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Do you know how they brought down Al Capone? The tax act. It isn't sexy, but it has teeth. That's the thing that's the real hallmark of this legislation here: It has teeth.

What people don't realize, because this has evolved over a span of about eight years, is that in six of the eight budgets the government has presented, there have been measures on anti-smoking—six out of eight. Very clearly, as in the case of many of the other things that Ontario has done, we had a plan, and we executed the plan. And the plan worked.

Let's go through some of it. The 2004, 2006 and 2007 budgets strengthened enforcement against the illegal manufacture and sale of tobacco products: improved enforcement tools, new offence provisions, stiffer fines, prison terms for certain offences, as well as new and better tools for inspectors and for law enforcement officials. That's what it's all about. That's 2004, 2006 and 2007.

In 2009, they had the authority to suspend the driver's licence of persons convicted of offences under the Tobacco Tax Act that involved the use of motor vehicles. Between April 1, 2008, and December 31, 2010, four million illegal cigarettes, 146,000 illegal cigars and a little over four tonnes of fine-cut tobacco or tobacco products have been seized by ministry officials.

There's a very clear, long-term, step-by-step effort on building a plan to reduce smoking in the province of Ontario, to prevent youth from starting to smoke, to advance smoking cessation, and it's working.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I did listen completely to the member from Nickel Belt—and intently, I might add—and, in fact, quite sympathetically, because her description and her natural passion, talking about her time as an oncology nurse, were quite compelling for anyone who was listening. It probably does more, effectively, than the bill itself to convince people to not smoke. So I commend her as a professional in the health care field for her opinions and her very strong views on the bill.

That's really my point here on Bill 186: to commend both the member from Nepean—Carleton from our side, who is the critic for the Ministry of Revenue, and who spoke quite passionately as well, but also the member from Nickel Belt, who has just spoken to us for an hour. It did not seem that long. It seemed refreshing, because it wasn't all about politics; it was about some of the missing pieces in the bill. She talked about the 13,000 people who die as a result of smoking every year. These are families that are affected by this directly. You'd think that there would be something more appropriate in this bill—and I might have a chance here to speak in a few minutes, depending on the rotation, but I'm in hopes that that will happen.

I also want to thank the medical officer of health for Durham region, whom you had mentioned in your



comments, Dr. Robert Kyle. “Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario and quitting smoking is one of the best steps a person can take to improve their health,” said Dr. Robert Kyle, Durham region medical officer of health.” So it’s very simple. “Although quitting isn’t easy, there are ways to improve your chances of quitting”—and they were promoting a contest offering people rewards for quitting.

This bill, as the member from Nickel Belt said, is punitive. I’m not sure that it gets the job done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The member for Nickel Belt, Ms. Gélinas—and I know I’m not supposed to refer to members by their name; of course I know that; but I want this Hansard excerpt to be explicit for the purpose of her householder—has made a very important contribution to this very serious debate. She has displayed once again her leadership in this chamber when it comes to real health promotion and fighting the scourge of tobacco addiction. The people of Nickel Belt are indeed blessed to have her as their member of provincial Parliament, and I tell you that the Legislature is fortunate to have her amongst us, with her very effective leadership in these very, very important files.

As a New Democrat, the member for Nickel Belt has led the way when it comes to fighting underaged smoking, fighting smoking of all types and fighting the promotion and the sale of illegal tobacco. Of course, cheaper tobacco means that more people have more access to it, including kids. We’ve had data before this chamber on many occasions, telling us that, increasingly, kids—who have less money, presumably, than their parents—get hooked on tobacco by buying this illegal stuff, this black market stuff that’s being sold for a mere fraction of what cigarettes cost in the corner store.

I’m going to be looking forward to joining the debate myself, hopefully this afternoon. I thought it was 4:30, Speaker; it was only 3:30. What can I say? These are those wonderful Monday afternoons here at Queen’s Park. I’m looking forward to joining the debate, because of course, on second reading, we’re talking about the general scope of the bill, which means we’ll be talking about addiction, which means I’ll be talking about this government’s promotion of Internet gambling and this government’s peddling of Internet gambling so that more and more young people can become addicted to that scourge.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It gives me great pleasure to join the debate today and to talk about reducing smoking in Ontario.

I was very pleased, when I was a regional councillor and a municipal councillor, to be part of the municipal government which introduced a smoke-free city in Ottawa. It was very important, but when all the municipalities had their own municipal councils, we were never able to do that. I was very surprised to hear these

two names mentioned by the member of the opposition party, because it’s these municipalities that were objecting to a smoke-free Ottawa. So thanks to the then mayor Bob Chiarelli and the medical officer of health, Bob Cushman, we were able to introduce this legislation. It was so positive for everyone—for the municipalities, for the businesses and for the residents—because, really, 72% of the population were not smoking. Then after, to come to Queen’s Park, another mayor, Jim Watson, who was then the minister, introduced this legislation for a smoke-free Ontario.

1550

I appreciate what the member for Nickel Belt said, but every step helps to reduce smoking in Ontario. We wanted to put emphasis on the youth. I hear a lot of people, a lot of my friends, who have quit smoking, but I know that we have to address the youth, because we see them, yes, outside of the schoolyard smoking. This bill will do exactly that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Nickel Belt has up to two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I’d like to thank the member for Durham for listening for the full hour—he gets a commendation right there—and to clarify for him that I was never a nurse. I am a physiotherapist. When I worked in the hospital on the interdisciplinary team, I worked as a physio, not as a nurse—but nothing wrong with nurses, especially since it’s Nursing Week this week.

The member from Welland, I think, described them by an appropriate name: the scourge of the tobacco industry. We have to put together a strong health promotion strategy to meet this industry, because this industry has been very creative in making sure that their clients, smokers, keep coming in fast and furious.

Once you have an addiction to nicotine, it is really hard to get rid of it. Certainly, most of the time, you will benefit from having help to deal with your nicotine addiction, and help is not always found.

The Minister of Community and Social Services says that every step helps, but there’s also a large cost to a health promotion strategy that is not rolled out properly. Not only do you have to decrease supply; you have to decrease demand. This punitive bill will turn a lot of people against any other positive step that a health promotion strategy could bring. Once you have been ticketed, once you’ve had to pay your \$100—\$175 with the taxation thrown in—you are not open to quitting smoking anymore.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** C’est avec plaisir que je participe au débat de la deuxième lecture du projet de loi 186, une loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac tout en respectant la loi d’un Ontario sans fumée et réduisant la contrebande du tabac.

I am very pleased to rise and speak to the second reading of the government’s proposed Bill 186, the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act.



I am sure that everyone in this Legislature is concerned about the health and well-being of their loved ones: their children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters and all Ontarians.

It is essential to recognize that Bill 186 is part of the whole of the government's approach to renewing and building on the significant foundation of the successful smoke-free Ontario strategy.

Without a doubt, since 2005, the smoke-free Ontario strategy has embodied one of the most comprehensive anti-smoking initiatives in North America. This strategy has discouraged youth from starting to smoke. It has supported smokers with quitting, and legislated smoke-free environments to protect Ontarians from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Today, we have a high level of compliance in bars and restaurants in the province that are smoke-free, thanks to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Cigarettes can no longer be openly displayed at convenience stores, thanks to my colleague the MPP for Ottawa—Orléans, Phil McNeely.

We are protecting our children from products designed to lure youth into smoking. This is why our government passed legislation prohibiting the selling and distributing of flavoured cigarillos in Ontario. We banned smoking in motor vehicles when children under 16 are present.

Bill 186, if passed, will provide us with the tools to further shield our youth from starting this harmful habit.

The availability of illegal tobacco threatens our success in protecting kids from the hazards of smoking and reducing smoking rates. Yes, illegal cigarettes are cheap. They can easily end up in the hands of young people.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health reports that in 2009, contraband tobacco accounted for 43% of all cigarettes consumed by Ontario high school students who smoke daily. The passage of Bill 186 would be a key component in our arsenal to stamp out the circulation of illegal tobacco.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario. Every year, it claims the lives of 13,000 people in this province.

Je trouve qu'il est particulièrement bouleversant d'apprendre que le tabac coûte la vie à trois fois plus de personnes que l'alcool, les drogues, les suicides, les meurtres et les accidents de la route combinés. Le tabagisme tue nos familles, nos voisins, nos amis et nos collègues. L'incidence du tabagisme draine aussi les ressources de l'Ontario en matière de santé. Chaque année, les maladies attribuables au tabac coûtent quelque 7,73 milliards de dollars à l'économie de la province; 1,93 milliard de dollars en coûts de soins de santé directs et 5,8 milliards de dollars en pertes de productivité.

Les coûts humains et financiers du tabagisme sont alarmants. C'est pourquoi, depuis les six dernières années, la stratégie Ontario sans fumée vise à aider les Ontariennes et Ontariens à poser des choix favorisant la protection et l'amélioration de la santé. La stratégie Ontario sans fumée aide les gens à sauver leur propre vie.

Les programmes et initiatives visant à décourager la population de commencer à fumer et à soutenir également les fumeurs qui souhaitent se défaire de cette

habitude ont toujours coexistés avec la restriction législative dans le contexte de la stratégie Ontario sans fumée. Parallèlement, le dépôt du projet de loi 186 a coïncidé avec l'annonce par le gouvernement de nouvelles mesures destinées à protéger encore davantage les enfants et les jeunes.

L'Ontario a déjà obtenu un certain succès dans ses efforts visant à dissuader les jeunes de commencer à fumer. Durant la dernière décennie, le nombre d'étudiants de la septième à la 12<sup>e</sup> année ayant indiqué avoir fumé au cours de la dernière année a diminué, passant de 28,4 % à 11,7 %. C'est encourageant.

But we must do more. That is why our renewed strategy includes resources to increase prevention efforts focused on protecting youth: youth-led tobacco prevention initiatives; research to determine what works when it comes to deterring young people from using tobacco products; and implementing innovative initiatives to sustain an effective effort to prevent youth from becoming addicted.

1600

The outreach programs include connecting with teenagers through youth engagement coordinators working in each of the 36 public health units in the province, to support young people around tobacco control activity in their community. The province's efforts to reduce tobacco use also offer help to encourage smokers in general to quit through a series of new and expanded supports.

Let me clearly state that smoking is not a lifestyle choice: Tobacco use is extremely addictive. The addiction to nicotine has been compared to the addiction to heroin and cocaine. It is one of the toughest addictions to break, and we know users rarely succeed in quitting on their first try. I am very happy to say that my lovely wife, Gisèle, has succeeded after smoking for over 40 years.

Effective cessation programs are crucial to support smokers on this difficult journey. Our government-supported initiatives have already assisted more than 1.25 million people to quit smoking since 2005, including the Driven to Quit Challenge, the Leave the Pack Behind program, the Smokers' Helpline and Smokers' Helpline online STOP program, collaboration with local public health units, and our recent collaboration with family health teams. This is just to name a few of the cessation initiatives that Ontario, in close partnership with a broad range of stakeholders, has made available to help smokers.

In 2010-11, the MHPS invested over \$6 million in smoking cessation programs and \$2.67 million in social marketing campaigns such as the Canadian Cancer Society's Driven to Quit Challenge, the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Persistence campaign and the Ontario Lung Association's Quit and Get Fit. Our government is extending and improving support so that smokers have many more doors to access to get help for kicking the addiction.

Our approach includes smoking cessation counselling in health care settings, including family health teams and other health professionals; working with pharmacists to



deliver cessation services in pharmacies; working to provide better access to prescription quit-smoking medication; providing targeted help for smokers with chronic diseases in a hospital setting; expanding access to nicotine replacement therapies through primary care providers; and working with trade associations, employers and unions to provide workplace information and support to employees.

Le ministère de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport injecte présentement un total de 42,8 millions de dollars dans des programmes d'abandon du tabagisme et des initiatives de prévention et de protection. La province a annoncé qu'elle investirait 5 millions de dollars supplémentaires en vue de consolider les efforts continus destinés à prévenir l'accoutumance au tabac chez les jeunes et à soutenir les fumeurs souhaitant arrêter de fumer.

Nous sommes convaincus que ces nouveaux investissements seront affectés à des stratégies prioritaires qui contribueront fortement à réduire le taux de prévalence du tabagisme. Ces actions, conjuguées aux mesures répressives prévues dans la lutte contre la contrebande du tabac telles que proposées dans le projet de loi 186, renforceront collectivement l'excellent travail accompli jusqu'ici dans le cadre de la stratégie Ontario sans fumée.

Our stakeholders have provided us with positive feedback, and underscore the importance of the steps we are taking. Martin Kabat, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division, has this to say: "The Canadian Cancer Society applauds the Ontario government's decision to invest additional resources into smoking cessation so that individuals who want to quit smoking can find the support they need.... this investment will save lives."

Dr. Lynne Thurling, president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, echoed a similar sentiment. She said, "The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario warmly welcomes the government's enhanced commitment to smoking cessation in Ontario and to reducing the supply of illegal tobacco across the province. We are committed to supporting initiatives that seek to improve the health of Ontarians and our health care system. We congratulate the government on this important initiative."

George Habib, president and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association, said that "improved access to smoking cessation products and services and a focus on preventing youth from starting to smoke are important elements of a provincial lung health action plan. Smoking kills and is a leading contributor to lung disease. Every step to help a smoker quit is the right one."

Dr. Peter Selby, clinical director of the addictions program and head of the nicotine dependence clinic at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, shared the following comments: "The comprehensive approach to addressing tobacco addiction by this province is exemplary. They are providing the right tools and resources to help people quit and improve their health."

At this point, I would like to elaborate more specifically on the key mechanisms contained within Bill 186

that will support our efforts. Collectively, the steps proposed under Bill 186 will help keep illegal tobacco products out of the hands of Ontario's youth. This will reduce the chances of them picking up the deadly smoking habit in the first place. This is the core of our approach.

Creating a smoke-free Ontario requires a multi-pronged and long-term approach. We are working across government to support additional action that builds on the smoke-free Ontario strategy. We are committed to work with our partners and stakeholders on an ongoing basis. We will continue to address the recommendations provided in the October 2010 report of the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group.

We will also continue to examine smoking rates in the province over time to determine what further steps are required to safeguard the health of Ontarians. The passage of Bill 186 is an important building block to help prevent young people from becoming addicted to tobacco. Under the McGuinty government, the smoke-free Ontario strategy has earned international recognition as a pioneer in the battle against tobacco use. The additional steps that I have outlined will build on this legacy by fostering a healthier province and helping to save lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I want to say at the outset that I support this bill very strongly, having been an advocate in this area for some period of time. In fact, some would know that I introduced the first piece of legislation to ban smoking in the workplace and in public places in 1985—December 1985, actually—when this issue of controlling smoking and stopping smoking wasn't nearly as popular as it is today.

1610

I would argue, however, that it has taken the government a long time to address some of the issues with regard to contraband tobacco. Not only are we losing somewhere between a half a billion dollars and \$1 billion in tax revenues—monies which we could spend on a whole host of good things that government could do, including improving health in other ways—but as anyone who has been involved with this issue knows, the best way to discourage young people from taking up this addiction is to raise the price of tobacco at the retail level. Unfortunately, the fact that some 40% to 45% of young people are buying illegal smokes at about \$10 to \$15 a carton rather than \$60 to \$80 a carton is inviting young people into the whole atmosphere of trying, continuing and becoming addicted to tobacco.

The public accounts committee found last year that it's absolutely essential that the Ministry of Revenue give up its hold on seizing contraband tobacco and give it to the police. This bill includes that, and I congratulate the government on that particular part of the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça me fait plaisir de faire quelques commentaires par rapport au membre de



Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. C'est sûr que tous les membres ici sont d'accord qu'il faut faire plus pour essayer d'encourager les gens qui fument à arrêter de fumer et pour décourager surtout notre jeunesse de commencer.

Le membre pour Glengarry–Prescott–Russell a mentionné certains programmes qui avaient démontré qu'il y avait certains succès. Le problème, c'est qu'on n'a pas une stratégie complète. Donc, on a des programmes qui sont lancés; certains d'entre eux sont bons mais on ne sait jamais si c'est un programme sur lequel on va pouvoir compter à long terme. J'ai donné l'exemple d'un programme pour et par les jeunes qui avait été mis en place à la grandeur de l'Ontario au travers des services de santé publique. On a vu le financement pour ce programme-là être réduit à néant au point où les groupes qui avaient été formés de jeunes, qui eux-mêmes allaient faire la promotion d'un Ontario sans fumée pour s'assurer que leurs pairs ne commencent pas à fumer—ça a été arrêté. Donc, un bon programme—et il en a nommé d'autres.

Le problème avec notre ministère de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport est que ça ne fait pas partie d'une stratégie. Le projet de loi que l'on a devant nous amène des mesures punitives qui ne sont pas un pilier d'une stratégie de la promotion de la santé. Ça pourrait faire partie d'une stratégie complète mais en ce moment, la stratégie complète, on ne l'a pas; on ne la voit pas. Bien qu'il y ait eu un groupe qui a fait ce genre de recommandation à la ministre, elle les a renvoyés du revers de la main en disant qu'elle n'était pas intéressée. Maintenant, c'est la ministre du Revenu qui nous amène ce projet de loi.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I certainly appreciate the remarks of the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who has had an exemplary career in public life in this province, both at the municipal and provincial levels. We will certainly miss his contribution to public affairs in the province of Ontario and the great community he represents. He has a very long history in this area, as mayor of Rockland, and certainly back in 1995 when he became the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, as being a very strong advocate for public health and in the area of looking at ways that we can reduce the amount of smoking in the province of Ontario.

One of the areas that I think Bill 186 is important—for too long in the province of Ontario we had this ridiculous situation. In order to seize illegal tobacco, you had to get on the phone or somehow contact a Ministry of Revenue person, who would then have to go out and do the inspection, and then perhaps they could find a police officer to lay a charge. This bill certainly gets rid of that barrier that was really preventing the police from doing their jobs in seizing illegal contraband tobacco in plain view. This bill goes a long way to get rid of that barrier, which indeed was preventing a lot of seizures taking place throughout this province.

I must apologize to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills: I said 1986; it was 1985, because I remember that when I came onto Peterborough city council, we actually looked at his legislation. We were one of the first municipalities in Ontario to draft an anti-smoking bylaw. I guess I could debate with my good friends from Ottawa who was first, but certainly we looked at the information that was available in the late 1980s. The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills had done a lot of work in that particular area, and we took a look at prospective laws and incorporated that into our bylaw.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I couldn't let the opportunity go by without commenting and praising the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. I was with him for some time this weekend and know just how much he prepared for his remarks today and how sincere he is in his desire to make Ontario a better place.

If he was asked by the Premier, I'm convinced he would run again. I know that in his heart he wants to run again—as I said, I did spend some time with him. Perhaps in his rebuttal he might deal with that issue. I think he would be sorely missed here, and I would suggest to you that he's—his skills in hockey are also a topic on which we could spend some time as well.

But I think in his remarks he went a bit too far on what the government is doing. He could have dwelled a little bit on what they failed to do. That will be adequately covered in my time, which is soon coming up. Just out of friendship and respect, I think the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—a good friend, I know, of the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills; they've both been here some time and do know how controversial this topic really is.

It is topical, and I'm old enough to remember the 1985 attempt to get that out of the workplace. In fact, where I worked at General Motors, it was commonplace. I wonder today how it was actually permitted. When you think back, it's almost like the old factories of the past. Even offices and boardrooms were full of smoke, which is certainly unacceptable by any measure today, as it should be.

As well, the example being set by models and movie stars and all the rest of it has gone completely the other way today—it's unacceptable, and that's the right model—but unfortunately, young people today are some of those who are picking this habit up. So this is an important bill, and we'll talk about it later.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** First of all, I want to thank very much the members from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Nickel Belt, Peterborough and Durham.

Let me tell you that I was fortunate, really, to visit Brock University on one program that we called Leave the Pack Behind. I was very shocked and really im-



pressed at how important they thought this program was for the students at Brock University, and I'm sure it is very important for all of us.

But now I can see that parties on both sides of the House seem to understand how important this bill is for the future of our young people. I go to schools quite often, and especially in high schools when I see kids coming out of the schoolyard for a smoke, I feel like going to speak to them.

Let me tell you that the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport has another program that is very important also. Sometimes, to prevent the habit of smoking, if you are busy with other things, you forget about the importance of smoking.

We have what we call Healthy Communities. I was able to go and see seniors to present this program. They joined the program—they applied for it and got the program going. It's unbelievable how good that program was for those people wishing to stop smoking.

I can see that we have some major roles to play, and I'm sure the three parties in this House will continue working toward stopping these killing cigarettes, as I call them, that we see so many people smoking right now. But the reduction in schools really encourages all of us, because it is working. Smoke-free Ontario is working.

1620

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** First of all, I'd like, along with others, to recognize that this is indeed Nursing Week in Ontario. My first duty this morning was to have coffee with the nurses at the Uxbridge Cottage Hospital. "Valuing the invaluable" being the theme for this week that we celebrate—Florence Nightingale's birthday is this week, so I guess that's the tradition. It's very much linked to the discussion this afternoon on Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act.

Our critic and our caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, are in support of the bill, so we put that on the record clearly. We could make comments with respect to some of the things that have been avoided and the lack of action, which is really—my point here this afternoon is to point out some of the stuff that perhaps you could say "too little, too late."

Some people say that we have the evidence in front of us that there are 13,000 people a year who lose their lives in Ontario from this terrible and tragic addiction. I'm going to be referring to a report called "Contraband Tobacco in Canada: Time for Action." So I'm not making this up. It's non-partisan, in the respect that it's really to bring some light to what should have been done over the eight years times 13,000. Think about that for a moment. It's about 100,000 people whose lives have been lost because of the lack of action. I'm not blaming it all on Premier McGuinty, by any stretch, because it's an addictive substance.

If you look at some of the provisions in the bill—they made some announcements, in the context of this bill, to provide up to \$5 million in transitional supports. One would wonder if they've done enough.

Here's the history. The McGuinty Liberals have waited eight long years to tackle this problem. That's first. They hide under the radar, under the smoke-free Ontario—and you can't smoke in your car—and a few tokenistic measures. But that's the record—eight years. We know the cost to the health care system and the human tragedy involved.

The Liberals have failed to address illegal cigarettes and the underground economy. They have failed to address illegal cigarettes and their link to organized crime. They have failed to address underage smoking as a result of contraband tobacco.

Our party, under Tim Hudak, has said that we will—we absolutely supported this, right from 1985, when the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills spoke up strongly on this topic. Our party would hold this government to account, and we are concerned about contraband tobacco and the loss of revenue and its cost to the Ontario treasury.

The member from Nickel Belt spoke earlier today, and I think her references to the individual's quality-of-life issues are something to be focused on here, and people should look at that.

I am a reformed smoker, if you will. I always figure it's sort of like being an alcoholic; I think you're always one puff away from being a smoker.

When I look at this, the effect on mostly seniors—we need to have a better, more sympathetic transition plan. Putting the aids out there, aiding people to break the habit, is a very important first step. This bill has a punitive tone to it. That's what scares me. The first approach is sort of the hammer, as opposed to extending the hand.

In the bill, which is a reasonably sized bill—it has a lot of details; it's 53 pages, with 54 different sections. Here's what it says under the enforcement provisions:

"Fines under the act: Currently, section 29 of the act prohibits the possession of unmarked cigarettes. Currently, penalties provided under the section include fines and, in certain circumstances, imprisonment. Amendments create separate prohibitions, and corresponding offences, for simple possession and for possession for the purpose of sale. For the offence of simple possession of a small quantity of unmarked cigarettes (for which the thresholds are set out), the penalty is a fine of a fixed amount based on the quantity of unmarked cigarettes. The imprisonment of repeat offenders is authorized." So you can go to prison. "In other cases, the penalty is a fine and may also include imprisonment"—and it goes on. The fines range from \$100 to \$500. The imprisonment provision is also carried on in section 29.1 of the act, which I won't go on to.

It also does provide some detailed clarification on some issues, because if people will circumvent the law—but I always refer it back to my constituents. I think it's very important that we keep in mind that, for the most part, we're talking about two specific groups, one of which I believe should be dealt with in an educational framework. They should be somehow forced to take a



course, if you will, to show them these catastrophic conditions to their lungs and their future quality of life. I think that would be my first attempt, as opposed to whacking them with a \$500 fine. I really do.

But we're sending mixed messages here. We're trying to work in a climate of the decriminalization of marijuana. What's that saying to young people? That this is just—"Marijuana, well, they're going to decriminalize that. Cigarettes are just an inconvenience—the dirty butts hanging around the schoolyard." It's more than that: It's killing you, and the evidence is in there now. The evidence is in there, clearly.

On the marijuana thing, I'd say that it's setting up a potential here for failure, so we've got to sort out our position. You can't tell me for a moment—and the Speaker in the chair now is a doctor; he would know. I can't imagine that smoking cigarettes could be any better or worse than some other carcinogen, like marijuana. I can't imagine. I mean, they're both bad. They're all bad; let's be honest about it. Why are we allowing the discussion to even occur?

But this goes on in the bill here. There are several definitions that are added to this section. This is needed for enforcement clarification, I think. The act connects them with the introduction of the concept of raw leaf tobacco and fine-cut tobacco. I suspect there are 100 ways of getting around the law, and that's what these clarifications are:

"The new expression 'tobacco product', defined in section 1 of the act, refers to what, in the current act, is defined as 'tobacco'. Tobacco and tobacco products: So it's broadening that inclusion.

"The current definition of 'tobacco' in section 1 of the act is replaced: the new definition specifies that tobacco means raw leaf tobacco and tobacco products." So we're getting into it.

Now, here's the real issue here. The real issue here is that they're giving the police, and this has been said many times, the authority to intervene and, theoretically, arrest; certainly, at the very least, give a ticket. That's what this is about, which seems to me like something that could have happened last week or even eight years ago, and I'm not sure why it didn't.

I guess, when you look at this, you've got to put some framework around it. In Durham region—again, I mentioned this earlier. In January 2011, Durham had a competition:

"Butting out could put you behind the wheel of a new car....

"The challenge is an incentive to adults to quit smoking in March. All participants who butt out" in March "and remain smoke-free for the month will be eligible to win a 2011 Honda CR-Z Hybrid or a Honda Insight Hybrid, one of two vacation getaways or one of seven regional prizes.

"Shelley Simic, a public health nurse with the health department, says, 'We know that many Durham region smokers are interested in quitting, as an ongoing health department survey indicates that approximately 20% of

Durham adults are currently smokers and of those, about 60% plan on quitting within the next six months.'"

So there's a lot of appetite, and that's happened through education and the right kinds of incentives, as opposed to a big-stick approach.

I'm questioning whether or not the police officers that I met with in the last couple of weeks are complaining. They don't have the resources to do what the laws are now. Pulling over a car and giving somebody a fine for smoking, or calling to produce your package of cigarettes to see if they're contraband—by the same token, the cynicism here is, if they pull out a pack of du Maurier, they're fine, because it's not contraband, so they're not stopping smoking in any respect. They're stopping contraband, or trying to. Most people will be transferring the cigarettes or somehow defacing them in such a way.

1630

It goes on, "Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario, says Dr. Robert Kyle, Durham's medical officer of health, adding that quitting smoking is 'one of the best steps a person can take to improve their health.

"Although quitting isn't easy, there are ways to improve your chances of quitting. This contest is one incentive to help people quit. We also encourage participants to talk to their health-care provider about other proven smoking cessation strategies," Dr. Kyle adds.

"The challenge is for Ontario residents, 19 years of age and older who are currently daily or occasional tobacco users. Individuals can register"—and that contest has been completed.

This just shows that every region has some such plan under a public health mandate to do outreach, educate and engage people to take the initiative to quit, and they need to have the right tools in the right place at the right time to make that happen.

Now, if I look at some of the data that's around here, "It's estimated contraband smokes—often sold in plastic baggies or from the backs of vans and trunks of cars—account for 43% of the cigarettes puffed on by high schoolers, according to a study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health last fall.

"Legal cigarette companies have complained not enough is being done to stop contraband tobacco, which eats into their sales.

"Because teens are sensitive to prices, illegal cigarettes are blamed for luring thousands more kids into smoking every year."

There's been a sensitivity around this whole contraband issue that the government has refused to deal with, actually, because of their willingness to be complicit in things that are going on, in my view, in certain outlets for these cigarettes.

The contraband scourge has six key principles:

For young people, it means cigarettes for sale in the schoolyard that cost less than a pack of gum.

For the taxpayers, it means annual tax revenue losses in the billions of dollars, funds which are no longer able to help support health and education initiatives.



For public security, it means unparalleled revenue flowing into organized crime to fund illegal activities such as arms trafficking and the growth of criminal networks.

Number four, for the honest merchant—this is your corner store merchant—it means the loss of a significant source of their revenue, one that creates jobs and offers an essential service to the community. After all, legal cigarettes are not illegal; it's a legal product. If they want to deal with that, that's a much more serious, more difficult challenge.

For aboriginal communities, this bill means the increased presence of criminal groups which operate behind the scenes on the reserve in order to participate in contraband tobacco sales and other illegal activities. Very controversial and sensitive; no one really wants to touch that one.

For the social fabric of our country and our province, it means citizens losing faith in their governments' ability to enforce the laws of the land to protect them, their children and their communities.

Some would say that the laws are there already and they're just not being enforced. They know in a lot of cases they just don't have the tools, and the persons on the front line in our law community are not being encouraged to enforce these existing laws. Somebody said earlier in the debate—I think it was the member from Nickel Belt—that she assumed that they had the right to intervene when a contraband product was being sold.

I think that if you look through, there's some really important evidence. I don't want to bore people, but I think it's not just a case of loss of revenue, which is clearly evident. I would just show you the amount: Contraband cigarettes are priced cheaply at, as I said, \$1 a pack, and sold with absolutely no government inspection, tax collection or age verification. That's circumventing the whole system that's in place there. It's illegal to sell cigarettes to minors.

“How significant is this problem?”

“In one word—huge.

“Independent research firm GfK Research Dynamics has ... analyzed the issue through both quantitative and qualitative studies over the past three years.

“Its 2008 study reveals some startling facts:

“Almost one half (48.6%) of the cigarettes consumed in ... Ontario were contraband.” Every time you see someone smoking anywhere, it's a 50% probability that it's contraband.

Where does it come from? How does it get there? Is it safe? Not is it safe—no cigarettes are safe. That's kind of an oxymoron.

“Ontario's share of the illegal cigarettes consumed in Canada has increased from 31.6% in 2007 to 48.6% in 2008”—and it's higher today—“and has more than doubled since 2006.”

A lot of other things have doubled here, like the debt and the deficit, but we'll stick to the facts here in this harmonious discussion this afternoon.

This government, for eight years, has sat on its hands. Why? At the risk of offending someone—“Quebec's share of the illegal cigarettes consumed in Canada has increased from 30.5% in 2007 to 40.1% in 2008.” My impressions are that in Quebec they maybe smoke more. I don't know for sure, but here's the facts.

Here's the statistics; here's the study. This study's available for people who are interested in finding out.

The trend is a very positive sloping line. It's accelerated. From 2006, contraband use in Canada has gone from 16% to 80% today—80%. It's about time they stepped up and recognized it.

Where is contraband tobacco coming from? I'm going to read it here. I'm not trying to create some angst here. According to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police 2008 Contraband Enforcement Strategy, there are a number of different products coming into Canada:

“cigarettes manufactured in the US and smuggled into Canada (90% of the contraband product available)” —that's coming in from the US, the contraband;

“cigarettes unlawfully manufactured in Canada, often on aboriginal reserves;

“counterfeit cigarettes, made to look like legitimate brands of tobacco products, smuggled into Canada, largely from Asian sources;

“improperly sold tax and duty-free cigarettes, often from aboriginal reserves;

“legal cigarettes stolen from retail stores or delivery trucks and resold through the black market.”

That's where this contraband stuff is coming from.

I'm running out of time here, and there's a couple of other facts. There are some facts here on Akwesasne, which I'm sure others will talk about.

Here's another one here. The largest sales revenue for the province of Ontario today is tobacco. Tobacco is higher than gas, lottery tickets, food items and others: 24% of the revenue is from tobacco, and a lot of that is revenue we're missing.

Solutions: There's a list of solutions for this. One solution is working with health care providers to educate, especially young people. I would dare say, in defence of people I know in my riding who are seniors and have smoked all their lives, it's unpleasant, and it's unfortunate. They should try to work with them with Champix and some of the other prescription medications with their doctor, and they should try to do everything they can. I don't hold out much hope because I, myself, have known people who have died from COPD or other respiratory ailments because of smoking.

I think its time has come, and this bill is certainly a step in the right direction, but the real issue is the legality of smoking itself. That's a broader debate which I don't want to get into. I could say some things that are small but humorous, but this certainly isn't the time to bring any kind of humour into this discussion when you're talking about people's lives and the province of Ontario trying to do the right thing.

Again, it's an important debate, given the fact that this is Nursing Week in Ontario. Many of those nurses could

tell patients, if empowered, and help them to be educated that it's simply the wrong thing to do, and our young people should listen up and make the right decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

1640

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** It was interesting listening to the member from Durham quoting a whole bunch of interesting and mainly sad statistics. You have to remember—we'll put it into perspective: Right now in Ontario, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has, for its 2011-12 budget, \$47.1 billion at its disposal to treat people once they are sick. If you look at our Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, they have \$398 million. Not even 1% is invested in Ontario in keeping people well versus treating them once they get sick.

There is a huge shift that needs to happen. One of the big ones is that we need comprehensive health promotion and tobacco control. We had made some great gains with smoke-free Ontario, and some of them he referred to. We need to bring this into another five-year or 10-year strategy so that we continue to see a decline.

With the climb in illegal tobacco flooding the market in Ontario and in Quebec—and, by the way, you're right: People in Quebec smoke more than we do here in Ontario, but we still smoke too much. If we see those cheap cigarettes coming in through the—

**Interjection:** They vote right.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** But they vote right. You're right. They smoke too much, but they vote right.

The flood of illegal cigarettes coming into our province makes it more and more tempting for youth to pick up the habit, as he said, because youth are so sensitive to pricing issues. As well, if this continues, it decreases the incentive for smokers to quit smoking. It has to change. We need a good health promotion strategy.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to bring a few comments to the debate. The member from Durham has offered us some sober thoughts about this.

As I've been listening intently to the discussions, sometimes in the House and sometimes on TV, I was hearing actually an admission of the complexity of the issue. Many times, people have been talking about the health care side of it, the business side of it, the tax side of it, the First Nations side of it and the border side of it. Let's make sure that we understand that we're talking about ongoing discussions with First Nations, Quebec, the federal government and the state of New York. The goal is to try to get a handle on the contraband issue, on top of the other issues that are being brought to the front, by having young people stop smoking. I acknowledge and admit that there are many things to do inside of this legislation, but it's not going to be able to solve all those problems all at once.

The call from the opposition in both cases has been, "Let's see if we can make sure that we do a better job of stopping kids from smoking," and I totally agree with

them. My friend from Nickel Belt and I were co-sponsors of a bill that saw the potential of a direct marketing campaign to get kids hooked. The bill was successful in getting the attention of the government. They did take action, but again, as in all cases, people always find a piece inside of the legislation that they can sneak around, so we've got to plug that hole. I wish her luck on her private member's bill. I didn't get a chance to talk to her about co-sponsoring it, but I do agree that what she's looking for is one more way to plug those holes to stop those kids from smoking. So I do acknowledge her work on that aspect and her desire and passion to ensure that our kids don't start smoking.

The member from Durham has brought up some interesting comments that basically ask us to look at a very complex issue and try to get to the heart of it, which is the illegal part. I do agree with him that we need to do more. This legislation doesn't solve the problem completely, but we're taking that next step to get there, and I appreciate the member's comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member for Durham, of course, spoke eloquently about the problem and brought a lot of facts into the debate which in some cases have been missing.

It's interesting listening to debate in the House, because you pick up certain facts that are always interesting, like when they do the butt counts outside of various offices. They found that 50% of the butts outside the Ministry of Finance were from illegal cigarettes. It's interesting that the government's own employees are supporting these kinds of things.

Some of the statistics that the member was talking about: He talked about children and how they are being coerced into smoking illegal cigarettes and smoking more of them—they can get a package of illegal cigarettes for about the cost of a package of gum, in some cases—and how that encourages youth and their ability to continue this habit.

You get to be about 25 or 30 years old; I think that's when you start to quit for the first time, and it goes on and on. I myself quit in 1983 after about 17 years of smoking. I started late in life. I started smoking late, at about 18 or 19 years old, and I have found that, over my experience with smokers, those who started later, those who started after they were 16 or 17, had an easier time of getting the monkey off their back. Some started as early as 12, 13 or 14; those people have a really difficult time quitting.

I don't see this legislation as helping people quit. I don't see this legislation as helping solve the problem that we're faced with in Ontario today.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm going to be speaking to this bill in approximately four minutes' time. Here we are; it's almost 5 o'clock on this long Monday afternoon. People have been very patient with us.



The member from Durham, of course, made an exciting, inspiring and passionate speech, and I thank him for that, because I've been starting to drift a little bit and I was fearful that we were losing some of the audience, that people were reaching for their remote controls. We're going to do our best, because his wrap-up is going to be a crescendo, and then I, of course, will have to struggle to meet the standard that the member from Durham inevitably sets for oratory here in this chamber.

It's going to be interesting, because as we know, second reading debate is about the general scope of a bill. I've taken a look at this. I've heard the debates and I've listened to the minister and parliamentary assistants and so on. Fundamentally, this bill is about tobacco, we're told. It's about a strategy to prevent new smokers from beginning to smoke, especially young people—we're told this; I'm not sure that's the case. That means it's about addiction and this government's fight to help people overcome their addiction. And if it's about addiction, then, it begs commenting on the government's support of Internet gambling, the most addictive form of gambling, a form of play that will create more addicts than any other gambling style or design.

So you see, in a roundabout way here, we're going to talk about this bill in its general scope. I know the Chair will be very, very patient with me, because I'm going to take us down to Welland. We're not going to take the QEW; we're going to take the scenic route, and I'm looking forward to that, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Durham has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Nickel Belt, I think, made a very good point in terms of how much money—half the budget, roughly 47% or something—is spent on treating, and less than \$1 billion is spent on wellness and prevention, so that's a very good point. In our own notes, we know that \$1.6 billion a year is spent on dealing with smoking and smoking-related illness. The member from Brant as well, I believe, talked about how there's more work to be done on the whole illegal aspect of it, and Halton gave a very sobering comment with respect to his history of smoking.

I could repeat a similar message, but I think I've really been the warm-up act for the member from Welland. In fact, any titillating comments that I might make will be eclipsed by his insights and comments with respect to his experience as a lawyer and as a person who, as I suspect, had to prosecute or defend drug users and other abusers. I'm sure he did that in his time as a lawyer.

I think we've all learned a lesson here. I can only summarize this: What took so long? Eight years—and I can only say this: They have failed to address illegal cigarettes and the underground economy, the Liberals have failed to address illegal cigarettes and their relationship to organized crime, and they have failed to address underage smoking as a result of contraband tobacco. I'm calling on the Minister of Health Promotion and the Minister of Revenue to step up to this, have some

hearings, strengthen the bill, and make it better to save the people of Ontario the grief of having to die, as was said earlier, from cancer related to smoking. That would be something worthy of this afternoon's debate.

I look forward to the remarks from the member from Welland.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I do want to make sure I mention Bill 176, the private member's bill in the name of Ms. Gélinas, the member for Nickel Belt. I'll describe that a little bit.

I just find it incredible that we would have to even contemplate introducing a bill that would ban tobacco products that are designed to taste like menthol and chocolate and so on. Obviously we know what the motive is, right? This doesn't appeal to 58-year-old people like me. This appeals to kids. You've got an awfully sinister industry out there that is still hell-bent on getting kids addicted to tobacco.

We all know the arguments the tobacco industry still makes. They say, "We don't tell people to smoke a pack or two packs or three packs a day. People can smoke one cigarette a day." And I know some people who somehow manage to pull that off—not very many. You see, the tobacco industry wouldn't make any money if smokers only smoked two cigarettes a day. They're relying upon the addicted smoker. That's what it's all about. And let's make note of the fact that this is a Ministry of Revenue bill. This is about ensuring that the government gets its piece of the action. It's about making sure that the government gets its revenue, its tax, on tobacco.

I suspect, just from the tone of the debate so far, that the bill may get all-party support. I suspect that. People should be a little more careful, because reference has been made—part of the guts of the bill, if you will, is section 29. Section 29, of course, provides penalties for, let's say, simple possession of untaxed tobacco, unmarked tobacco. There's going to be a device whereby the tobacco or the cigarette—I presume that the tube, the white paper, is going to somehow be marked, as compared to now, where I believe a stamp—it's like a postage stamp on a package of tobacco that indicates that various taxes have been paid on it, that it's legal. They're somehow going to put a watermark or something in the actual paper wrapping of the cigarette; how they're going to mark loose tobacco, I don't know, but I suppose maybe they're going to mark the package.

People should pay close attention to section 29. Section 29 gives the authorities some pretty unprecedented powers of detention, search and seizure. As a matter of fact, you'd think that the notorious Dalton McGuinty G20 secret regulation was a trial run.

"(3) If a person authorized by the minister has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a person is in possession of any unmarked cigarettes" that person "may, without a warrant,

"(a) stop and detain the person;



“(b) inspect the person’s personal belongings for unmarked tobacco products;

“(c) if any unmarked tobacco products are found, require the person to provide identification....”

“Reasonable and probable grounds”? Interesting. I suppose if you’re seen leaving a tobacco shack that’s known for the sale of illegal tobacco, that would provide reasonable and probable grounds. But we should be very careful that in the relentless fight against tobacco that we don’t give up some traditional legal standards, especially when it comes to search and seizure and detention of the person, amongst other things.

There’s been some reference to the act being, let’s say, punitive. I find the fines, the penalties, somewhat inconsequential. If the quantity of cigarettes found is 200 or fewer, the penalty is a fine of \$100, and in addition to that, a multiple of three times the amount of tax that would have been paid had that consumer bought those cigarettes legitimately. I suspect that usually the second category will be a more common one. If the amount of cigarettes is more than 200 but fewer than 1,001, there is a fine of \$250. In view of the fact that a carton—how much is a carton of cigarettes? I don’t know what a carton of cigarettes. It’s—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Eighty dollars?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Eighty dollars? Sixty dollars, \$70. The prospect of buying bootleg tobacco, black market tobacco, is a significant enough saving that I suspect people are prepared to take the risk, and I’m not sure that these monetary penalties are sufficient to deter that consumer from taking the risk.

I appreciated the comment made earlier by some people speaking to this bill, certainly reinforced by the member from Nickel Belt and certainly spoken to by the member from Durham, that it seems to be that when somebody’s committing this type of an offence, it’s an opportunity for an intervention in that person’s life and lifestyle. I think it would be far more effective.

The crazy thing is, you’ve got corner store people coming to you all the time. You know what regional health departments do: They set up stings to bust these people, right? They send in young-looking people—or no, what they are is they’re young people who look as if they could be 18 or 19. A busy corner store operator or a careless, youthful employee doesn’t check the age and, sure enough, the person’s underage and the corner store gets dinged, and you’ve got to sell a heck of a lot of loaves of bread to make up for the fine that you have to pay. But it’s still not illegal for young kids, underage—it’s illegal for you to sell them tobacco, but it’s not illegal for them to possess it. For the life of me, there’s not one of us who hasn’t driven past secondary schools and seen that gaggle of kids across the road from the school, smoking up the store. It’s heartbreaking, amongst other things.

But it causes me great concern—and I’m not talking about turning these kids into criminals or throwing them into Sprucedale or a training school. I’m talking about making it an offence for a person under age to possess

tobacco such that—you can do all sorts of creative things. You could, as the penalty, as the consequence, make them attend a quit-smoking program. You could make them attend a heart and lung association program. These people love to put on those kinds of programs. You could maybe scare the daylights out of them: Have the member for Nickel Belt relate the story that she told today about dealing personally with people dying of cancer—or any other member of this assembly, for that matter, or any other person in the community.

Here we are: a revenue bill that, in and of itself, I’m not convinced is going to do much to reduce tobacco consumption, because I say that the penalties aren’t high enough. Others in my own caucus might even disagree with me on this. But the break you get when you buy illegal tobacco is so huge that the penalties—a \$250 fine for several cartons of cigarettes? People are going to take that risk. I believe the penalties have to be stronger, so that people won’t even think about doing it. The consequences would be so serious that risk aversion will kick in, rather than risk taking. After all, these are smokers: They take risks every time they put a cigarette to their mouth. Quite frankly, there isn’t enough downside here.

The revenue bill: We met with the Ontario Provincial Police last week. The member from Durham made reference to his meeting with police officers. I know the member for Nickel Belt was with me in our caucus room when we were meeting with OPP officers. The member for Nickel Belt very specifically raised the issue of enforcement of this type of legislation. She asked those cops point blank, and that’s after these police officers had explained to us that they need a minimum of 600 new OPP officers across Ontario to do core policing. They made reference to the fact that every time there’s one of these flashy press conferences here, either in the government caucus room or down in the media room, where you’ve got the Attorney General—the last time, I saw the Attorney General was there, and the Solicitor General, and half a dozen other ministers, and they looked like Pinochet with his cabinet, because they had all these police chiefs standing behind, with all the gold braid and the gold leaves on their visors. It looked like a movie set.

The chiefs of police, of course, are going to come, and they’re not going to tell the minister, “Oh, please, I’ve got more important things to do. We’re busy out here.” But photo op after photo op—and one of the things that the OPP told us last week is: Don’t forget, every time there’s an announcement of X number of police officers dedicated to a specific target, like guns and gangs, those are cops being taken away from other parts of the province and from other policing duties, because there are no new cops.

**1700**

We asked the police. The member from Nickel Belt, point blank, asked the police about enforcing this type of legislation contained in Bill 186. I don’t want to burn anybody here. The police were quite clear: This wasn’t going to be high on the priorities. They’re unable to meet the demand for their time and resources and energy now,



so that enforcing a revenue bill, which is what this is, is not going to be very high on their priorities at all. They're stretched too thin.

Where does that leave us? Window dressing, fluff, a bill that's the consistency of bull spit, and of little more value. And the government pretending this is part of an anti-tobacco strategy? Come on. Come clean, please. A government that says that it's so concerned about young people and their exposure to tobacco and the risks that it poses in terms of addiction that they'll go to any lengths to control it? This is hardly a length.

Let's talk about addictions for a minute. This is the same government that, in its budget bill, introduced Internet gambling to the province of Ontario, the most addictive form of gambling, a form of gambling that is designed—just like the candy-flavoured cigarettes or cigarillos like the member for Nickel Belt is trying to ban with her Bill 176, just like the tobacco companies and the tobacco industry have candy-flavoured cigarillos because they want to bring young people into their regime and get young people hooked so they become clients for life. Premier Dad has become Premier Bad. This government is introducing Internet gambling with the official seal of approval of the province of Ontario on it, and we're not just talking about poker games. We're talking about the mindless gambling games. We're talking about the fake roulette wheels and slot machines.

I had occasion before—but I want to do it again—to make reference to some of the evidence given in litigation that occurred here in the province of Ontario, in a case called *Dennis v. Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.* One of the expert witnesses was Dr. Kevin Harrigan, “research associate professor at the University of Waterloo where he teaches and conducts research in computer-game design including electronic gambling games such as slot-machines and video poker games. His particular research interest at present is in understanding whether and, if so how, structural characteristics of slot machines may explain why so many people develop an addiction to them.”

We're not talking about your friendly Saturday night poker game anymore. We're talking about kids glued to a screen—nurtured on it already because we've Pokémoned them to death—with mommy or daddy's credit card in their left hand, developing one of the most vile addictions with the approval and with the seal of authenticity on it of the province of Ontario, by Premier McGuinty and the Liberals. It doesn't have to be a kid, quite frankly, because daddy will be doing it, too.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock for a second. The member from Mississauga—Streetsville on a point of order.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Pursuant to standing order 23(b)(i), the member has strayed very far off topic. Unless he wishes to assert that the kids are smoking while they're doing gambling, he is indeed off topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. I believe that the connection here is the issue of addiction.

Member from Welland?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I believe that was a point of envy, not a point of order. He just wanted to get in on some of the speech action this afternoon. But there will be time for a rotation, and the member from—how'd things go federally in that riding, by the way?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Interesting. The member for Mississauga—Streetsville will have his kick at the can.

Again, the interesting thing is: Yes, there is a consistency to addictions. The same things go on in the brain that make you addicted to alcohol, that make you addicted to heroin, that make you addicted to tobacco, that make you addicted to pornography, that make you addicted to gambling. Let's take a look at some of those universal themes, as I take the member from Mississauga—Streetsville on that scenic route to Welland via Highway 2 and Highway 20, via Regional Road 24.

What are the structural characteristics of slot machines that may explain why so many people develop an addiction to them? These are the slot machines—electric slots—that Premier Dsad, now Premier Bad, is unleashing here in the province of Ontario. “It is a distinguishing characteristic of slot-machine gambling that the player wins very frequently while as a matter of statistical probability, his bankroll steadily declines as the wins are reinvested.” See, these machines are an illusion. It's why all the ringing and dinging and bang, bang, bang, ping, ping, ping is going on, because you win more and more frequently but less and less monetarily. Before you know it, the machine—the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., for that matter; well, the government of Ontario—has all of your money. Dr. Harrigan expressed the opinion “that slot machines are highly addictive.” Why—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would remind the member and caution the member to bring it back to the addiction of tobacco as well.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Of course. I appreciate this because I've only got four and a half minutes left. I've got some work to do, don't I, Speaker? Any help you can give me, I gratefully accept.

We've got a highly addictive government addicted to gambling revenues, luring more and more people into highly addictive gambling. The observation was made by a fellow talking head on some broadcast that they did. As a drunk, you can drink away the family home in three or four or five years; as a gambler, you can gamble it away in a month. It's that much faster. There's that much less time to intervene. I know I've got to move on because there's only three minutes and 50 seconds left.

The other expert witness was Dr. Robert Williams, Ph.D. in psychology from McMaster University. He indicated to the court that the factors that contribute to the likelihood that a person would engage in problem gambling include:

“(i) the availability of electronic gambling machines”—and here's where we make the relationship to tobacco, because the easier the access to tobacco and the cheaper the tobacco is, the greater the likelihood of addiction, just as there is with gambling;



“(ii) erroneous beliefs about how gambling works and the probabilities of success;

“(iii) the ready availability of funds through nearby automated cash machines; and

“(iv) ineffectual self-exclusion programs.”

How can this government wave this bill like some flag of victory when they’ve thrown the towel in and are creating made-in-Ontario, authorized-by-your-very-own-Premier-McGuinty Internet gambling sites that are going to make more and more people addicted to gambling, including, young, young people—and including their parents—and where people are going to be gambling away, as I say, in short order, the family home? We know that happens. We know the despair that gambling creates. We know the disease that it is. We also know that, as I say, the same addictiveness is what is part of the tobacco addiction.

I’m interested in seeing how this bill progresses. I have every confidence in our critic the member from Nickel Belt and her ability to steer this bill through, amongst other things, committee. I trust that the government is anxious to get it to committee. I don’t know whether it will be a topic of discussion at tomorrow’s House leaders’ meeting, but I’ll certainly be asking for some directions from the member from Nickel Belt about what her goals are.

Under the cover of our concern about young people and smoking, I’m concerned about excessive police powers when it comes to enforcement. But then, I’m concerned about the fact that there aren’t enough cops to enforce it anyway, so what the heck, why worry? Right? The cops were candid. You can’t expect the cops to be going after—because the cops know that they’re being set up here. You can’t expect that they’d waste huge resources in going after the government’s money problems when you’ve got cops—we learned about cops in northern Ontario and remote, rural Ontario—who are an hour apart from each other and the drama and danger that creates for a police officer or the citizenry when a cop, an OPP officer, goes into, let’s say, a domestic violence scene alone, and his potential partner is an hour away. What is he supposed to do, not enter the house while some woman is getting the daylight beat out of her, because his partner isn’t there yet, is an hour away? You’ve got to go in.

1710

You’ve got these incredibly explosive and dangerous scenarios—everybody knows that a domestic violence scenario is one of the most dangerous for police officers as well as the victims of the crime—and the closest cop is an hour away or further. That’s not creating safe and secure communities, is it? And it’s not creating a safe working environment for the cop.

We have high expectations of police, as we should. We scrutinize every bit of their conduct, as it should be. But if we’re going to do that, we had better make sure they have the resources and the training—including the staffing—that they need.

Yes, the bill will do a little bit—a very, very little bit—to address the problem of contraband tobacco,

contraband cigarettes and the influence that has on young people who are starting to smoke, but at the end of the day, not a whole lot—not a whole lot at all—will it, Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It is always a privilege to follow the member from Welland in debate. While I’m not exactly sure which act or acts he was discussing, although I am sure that not much of it related to the bill before the House, one has to say that as a raconteur he probably doesn’t have a peer anywhere here. As one who has been here for about eight years, I have to say that the member for Welland has been, in many ways, a very fine role model and example for us all. So I thank him for his contribution, whatever in creation it was.

Now, I just have one technical correction to make. The member, in his exuberance, let slip on one of the few occasions he talked about it that there were search provisions in Bill 186, but in fact, it is just seizure, not search.

As I’m sure the member is well aware, because he’s got an excellent record of attendance, tobacco provisions and penalties have been increased and stiffened in six of the last eight budgets. This is important, because when we look at tobacco enforcement, it covers three federal and two provincial acts. The federal acts are the Excise Tax Act, 2001, the Customs Act and the Tobacco Act, and the provincial acts are the Tobacco Tax Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

This is running according to plan and just the latest in a progressive series of steps by which the province of Ontario tightens the supply of raw leaf tobacco, tightens the restrictions against distribution, display, advertising and marketing, and tries to dry it up from the vantage points of both supply and demand. I look forward to discussing this in the minutes to follow.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was most interesting to listen to the member from Welland. He knows how to tell a good story for sure, but he also brings some very important points.

On January 21 this year, I had the opportunity to go for a ride-along with the Sudbury Regional Police and saw first-hand the number of calls coming in. Priority number one was dangers to person or property, and then priorities two, three and four coming up on the screen in the cruiser where I was. I was in for a 12-hour shift from about 4 o’clock in the afternoon until 4 o’clock in the morning on the night of Friday to Saturday. We never even covered all of the priority ones, never mind looking at priorities two, three or four. Forget it. It was non-stop with just the priority ones.

So last week when the OPP were here, I asked where illegal tobacco would fall within the priority system, and he repeated the exact same thing I had been told by the Sudbury Regional Police: Priority number one is dangers to person or property. He said that in his wildest



imagination he could not see how illegal tobacco would be a danger to person or possessions. I said, "Smoking gives you cancer," and he started to laugh. He said, "Yes, but it takes 40 years. Within 40 years, we'll get there."

So in a regular shift for the cops in northern Ontario doing excellent work, making this law into reality is not going to happen. They haven't got the manpower to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Everyone should be up on their feet trying to compliment the member from Welland, who brings a lot of sort of related comments with respect to the addiction issue.

I think the issue we're dealing with is something quite straightforward. I think the most troubling are the two age groups: the very young people who are being affected by this lack of action and the elderly. It's got this very draconian approach: to kind of put them in jail for smoking. I think there's a better way of approaching it that's more educational and more firm, but also providing the people with the tools.

As he said in his remarks, now they've legalized on-line gambling. Are they doing this all for revenue? When you look at the amount of revenue being lost by contraband cigarettes, you'd think they'd be—maybe that's really what the agenda is here, is increasing the revenue by increasing the enforcement. Not working on the addiction side of it; working on the "How can we increase the revenue?" side of it.

Maybe it is coming together. Maybe I see it as—you gamble online. You can be smoking at home because you can still smoke in your house and that, and you won't be caught in your own home with contraband cigarettes. So maybe it does make sense. I don't know. Maybe they're just trying to increase their revenue. I hope that's not the case. I wouldn't want to cast any suspicions on it, but they have a deficit that's something close to \$17 billion, if you can believe that number. But it is a troubling thing. I'm not sure what they're actually going to do to fix the revenue problem, except raise taxes.

What they should probably do—they're probably going to do this. They're probably going to increase the HST to 15%, I think.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** You're making that up, John.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Look, I've heard it on the street from my constituents, and I always listen to my constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Comme professionnelle de la santé, ça me fait toujours plaisir de parler sur le sujet de la cessation du fumage. J'entends mes collègues parler sur ce sujet-là et je les trouve un petit peu déprimants parce que je crois que ce qu'on avance ici aujourd'hui va vraiment aider à améliorer la situation.

I see many tools here in the proposal that will make it easier for smokers to get support and reduce the demand

for tobacco. For example, they will receive free nicotine replacement therapy that will be available through family health teams and public health units. The pharmacists will be there with their advice. They will be able to get other services and other professional advice from hospitals, from workers in different health care occupations. Also, there will be a \$5-million investment in the smoke-free Ontario strategy. I think these are all very positive steps that will help our youth—and the not-so-young—to either stop smoking or, at least, not begin smoking.

One thing that I was very disappointed in is, when we moved forward with smoke-free Ontario, the leader of the official opposition voted against it. I don't know what he's going to do this time: if he will continue to vote against it or if he will support Bill 186, which will help all of us to improve our quality of life and especially our health.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Welland has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I want to be very, very clear about the search and seizure provisions in this bill. Section 29 permits "the person authorized by the minister may, without a warrant,

"(a) stop and detain the person;

"(b) inspect the person's personal belongings for unmarked tobacco products;"—that means your clothing, that means your knapsack, that means your containers, that means your vehicle, as well as the plain view provision.

But in addition to the plain view, "(4) A police officer or a person authorized by the minister may, without a warrant, seize, impound, hold and dispose of unmarked cigarettes ... if he or she has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the unmarked cigarettes are in the possession of a person contrary to subsection (1)...." Those are very, very specific, dramatic powers of search and seizure.

1720

It's not the search that's incidental to arrest; it's the sort of bad detentions and searches and seizures that were conducted during the G20 weekend, with Premier McGuinty's notorious secret and illegal regulation. One wonders how members of his cabinet could have participated in such an evil and anti-civil-libertarian exercise. Why wasn't there even one person who was prepared to ring alarm bells?

Once the Premier got caught, of course—you see, not only were members of the Legislature told incorrectly about the impact of the regulation, but the cops were told incorrectly about what the impact was of the regulation, and that's a very, very sad thing to do.

You've got the Premier today running around criticizing another party leader for wanting to tinker with the Human Rights Tribunal. This is the Premier who abolished the Human Rights Commission and who imposed an illegal G20 regulation on the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** For those at home who are perhaps watching this just before dinner, I'd like to welcome you



to a debate on an act whose intent is to renew Ontario's smoke-free strategy.

What are we trying to do here? We're trying to prevent youth from starting to smoke, we're trying to enhance smoking cessation resources and supports, and we're trying to reduce the availability of cheap, illegal tobacco. That's the scope of what's going on in this bill.

Before I start, I would like to dedicate what I'm saying to an old friend of mine who worked with me back in the 1980s. She was a bright, vivacious, attractive, well-educated woman whom I depended on and was very fond of in the time that we worked together. She and her husband live in Calgary now, and I was just informed that she has contracted untreatable phase-four lung cancer. One of the things that she could never manage to do is to kick the weed. In this vein, I'd like to, in remembering that, remind anyone who's watching that there is no free lunch. There is no free smoke. It's going to get you. She had not smoked a cigarette in 20 years.

Tobacco availability isn't what it used to be. I am part of the baby boom generation. Let's just remind people of what the world was like as we grew up. You could buy a pack of smokes for under a buck. You could buy them from a vending machine. You could go into a corner store. They were cheap, they were available and they were advertised. The tobacco manufacturers sponsored events—cultural, sporting; you name it—and they prompted people to smoke.

I can remember my high school colleagues smoking on the school bus. In my first year of university, I can remember bringing in a screwdriver so that we could unscrew one of the windows and open it up in the middle of the winter because I was in a class where several of the people insisted on smoking these absolutely horrible European cigarettes, and it was either that or suffocate.

Tobacco is harder to get now. Tobacco is more expensive now. In this vein, the province of Ontario is doing its best to both reduce the supply and diminish the demand for tobacco, because tobacco kills.

Let's go over a few of the points. Addressing illegal tobacco is a priority for the Ministry of Revenue, and the province is making significant progress. Let's go over a few of them. Convictions under the Tobacco Tax Act increased by 44% in fiscal 2009-10 from the previous year. From April 1, 2008, until the end of last year, 2010, about 135 million illegal cigarettes, 700,000 untaxed cigars and about 45 million grams—that's about 45 tonnes—of fine-cut tobacco had been seized by ministry investigators and inspectors. How much does this amount to? Figure that a cigarette is roughly one gram of tobacco. It gives you an idea of the amount of tobacco that's been pulled off the streets.

During fiscal 2009-10, investigations nearly tripled compared to fiscal year 2008-09, and this act is just one in a series of acts that depends on working with the support of the federal government through the acts that I mentioned just a few minutes ago, as well as authorities in Quebec, New York state, our neighbouring states and various police agencies. This isn't the kind of act that, all

at once, you can throw out and say, "Here it is. It's one grand omnibus bill," because you and your partners have to advance increment by increment, and do it together. You can't get too far ahead of your partners nor lag too far behind, which is what this bill recognizes and what this bill does very effectively.

Let's talk about some of the things that are actually in the bill. The bill proposes new measures that, if passed, would increase oversight over the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province. It would permit police to seize illegal tobacco that's found in plain view and, for the first time ever, require fine-cut tobacco to be marked—all steps forward to our goal of reducing youth smoking.

This is important because raw leaf tobacco is to smoking very much what crude oil is to the petroleum industry: no raw leaf tobacco, no smokes. Getting right at the source, let's talk about some of the things that Bill 186 proposes to do with regard to the source: raw leaf tobacco and manufacturing.

Bill 186 proposes significant strengthening of controls over the production, distribution, sale and purchase of raw leaf tobacco. Of course, raw leaf is the single non-replaceable input to the manufacture of all tobacco products, both legal and illegal. The proposed amendments in Bill 186 would, if passed, enable the province to better control the production, distribution, sale and purchase of raw leaf tobacco throughout the entire supply chain, including raw leaf that's exported from or imported into Ontario. So for everybody who wants one simple thing, one simple act, it can't be done. We've got to do this in stages, working with the federal government, working with the adjoining jurisdictions, working with other police forces. The bill has also proposed complementary enforcement measures to ensure the integrity of the new licensing and registration system for raw leaf tobacco.

Before we continue too far down the line of the abstract, I want to bring it back to the line of the practical. I had another friend who lived in Toronto, a very lovely lady who, by her own admission, said, "I like to smoke." She was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Here's the thing about lung cancer: It doesn't kill you right away. It's incredibly painful. And when does it take you? It doesn't actually take you at the time that you inhale the fatal puff. Some of my schoolteacher friends have said, tongue-in-cheek, that the attitude in high school—I certainly remember this—is that you feel that you're immortal, indestructible and infertile. It's an interesting thought to conjure with, but certainly the immortal and indestructible part. That puff that you inhale in high school can kill you.

This woman, Stephanie, was in her 40s, divorced, the product of a very wealthy family—all of the things that you aspire to in your adult life. Her children were pretty much full-grown. One day she discovered that she had lung cancer. She went to the Mayo Clinic. She spent a lot of her own money on it, looking at specialists throughout the United States, and in the end it killed her. That's the kind of person who this act aims to assist. That's the kind



of thing that we're hoping, if you're watching this, makes you say that's your last cigarette. Or if your friends have said, "Try this," we're hoping that you won't, because it will kill you.

Ontario has taken measures in five of the past eight years to address illegal tobacco. If passed, Bill 186 would make it six of the last eight years. Some examples include controls on cigarette-making machinery, unless you're registered as a manufacturer under the Tobacco Tax Act, and penalty provisions, to include a fixed penalty clause that's three times the tax assessed on illegal products, which escalate with each subsequent offence. As I said earlier in one of my comments, just like Al Capone, this is a tax act. It may not be sexy but, by God, it has teeth. Enhanced seizure provisions, new offence provisions, stiffer fines and prison terms for certain offences, including for persons distributing contraband—that's what it takes.

1730

Among the other things that Bill 186 offers are new and better tools for ministry inspectors and law enforcement officials, including expanding the ability for investigators to seize contents and records found in a vehicle transporting contraband tobacco, and adding a prohibition to suspend a tobacco retailer's licence to sell or store tobacco in a retail outlet if the retailer has repeatedly contravened the Tobacco Tax Act or the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. So if you're making money out of this and you want to get involved in illegal smokes, we're going to take away your source of funding, and we mean it, because the act has teeth.

There's authority for the court to suspend a driver's licence for persons convicted of offences under the Tobacco Tax Act involving the use of motor vehicles. You think you can make some easy money loading a couple of garbage bags full of baggies with illegal smokes and driving them from one place to another place? You're going to lose your car; you're going to lose your licence. There are provisions to prohibit the possession of any quantity of unmarked cigarettes, unless they're otherwise permitted under the Tobacco Tax Act. Like I said earlier, teeth—teeth in that.

I want to talk for a third time about a friend of mine whose experience underlines why we're doing this. I had a friend in the 1980s and 1990s named Donna, who lived in Regina, also divorced. She had a lovely daughter, and her daughter had just gotten married. She was a new grandmother. She had been married as a teenager, so she was in her early 40s, at her peak earning years, had her house all paid for and life was looking good. But Donna just couldn't manage to give up smoking.

One day I was sitting at home in Mississauga. The phone rang, and it was her on the other line. I looked at it, and I could see the area code 306 from the province of Saskatchewan, but I didn't recognize the number. I picked up the phone and it was her. I said, "I don't recognize the number. Where are you calling from?" She said, "I'm calling from the hospital." I said, "What happened?" She said, "Well, I've been diagnosed with lung

cancer." We talked about that for a little bit, and finally I said, "What is the prognosis?" She said, "Not good." And I said, "Talk to me a bit about it."

We spoke to one another on and off for the next few weeks, and then there was a long period of silence. One of the people I knew from my company advised me—or advised a lot of us via an email—that my friend Donna had died of lung cancer, for absolutely nothing, because she just couldn't quit smoking. And those were legal smokes. They weren't smokes that you look at and think to yourself, "I wonder how many rat droppings are in this tobacco?" Do you really know what's in the stuff in that plastic baggy? How much do you know about the person who sold it to you? Do you really trust them? Even if you want to smoke, and I hope you don't, why are you buying this stuff?

Let's go back to some of the things that are in this bill. The tobacco retailer inspection program, established five years ago, in March 2006, conducts on-site inspections of tobacco stocks at retail outlets to ensure that tobacco products in Ontario have their taxes paid. Why are we going after taxes? Because that's the part with teeth. The ministry staff target an average of 450 retailer inspections every month. There is a consequence to dealing in illegal tobacco, and that consequence is that it's going to cost you serious money.

The Ministry of Revenue inspectors have been trained in the identification of illegal and counterfeit products. Where illicit tobacco is discovered, the product is seized and the vendor is assessed a penalty of between three and eight times the value of the Ontario tobacco tax owing. The penalty varies with the amount of illegal tobacco seized.

Untaxed and unmarked cigarettes are discovered in about 10% of retail inspections. The program's effectiveness is increased with stronger participation among other law enforcement agencies, which is why there's a risk-based model to assist in identifying potentially non-compliant retailers. There is a whole host of behaviours that you can ascribe that say, "If all of these things are true, or even some of them are true, we should pay attention to these." If it looks like you're running a clean game, not many of these things will be true, so you're not really going to get targeted. Most of the unannounced inspections are going to come to people who very clearly appear to be contravening the act.

Total penalties assessed, since the inception of the program, against those in violation of the Tobacco Tax Act amount to more than \$18.4 million.

Where the retailers continue to not comply with the Tobacco Tax Act and/or the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, prohibition notices have been used as an enforcement tool. These measures prohibit specific retail locations from selling any tobacco products during the enforcement period. So if you're in a business where a lot of your top-line revenue flows from the sale of tobacco, and it's supposed to be legal tobacco, and you want to get creative and start selling cigarettes in baggies, remember, you're going to lose your licence to sell legal tobacco,



and all the people who come in and buy something else while they're in your store looking for a package of whatever aren't going to come into your store. It's a lot like losing your liquor licence if you're a bar.

From April 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010, 131 million illegal cigarettes, 558,000 untaxed cigars and about 40 tonnes of fine-cut tobacco have been seized by ministry investigators. Investigations have almost tripled in fiscal year 2009-10, compared to the previous fiscal year. This act has teeth, and people are using those teeth.

The number of convictions under the Tobacco Tax Act in fiscal 2009-10 increased 44%. Not only does it have teeth, not only is the ministry going to get to you, but you're going to get convicted. It's not worth it. Don't do it.

To create a detriment and inform the public and media of ministry efforts to curtail the flow of illegal tobacco, news releases summarizing prosecutions under the Tobacco Tax Act are posted on the ministry's website and on the government of Ontario's newsroom sites.

All of this has to continue to move forward in concert with the federal acts under which the province of Ontario works, along with the acts in neighbouring jurisdictions.

There are some notable changes to enforcement measures in other jurisdictions. For example, in our neighbouring provinces of Quebec and Manitoba, they too have announced various enhanced enforcement measures to prohibit and discourage the sale of illegal tobacco, including, in Manitoba's case, prohibiting the sale of tobacco products over the Internet; increasing the penalty and fine amounts for tobacco-related offences; forfeiture of vehicles used in connection with tobacco tax offences; and denying driver's licence renewals to those with unpaid fines—very similar to what's being proposed here.

In Quebec, the National Assembly recently passed Bill 59, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act, and it too introduced new measures to fight illegal tobacco in Quebec, including a moratorium on issuing manufacturers' permits, increased fines and penalties.

I'd like to deal very briefly with the seizure provisions here. Currently, if a police officer sees illegal tobacco in plain view, the officer would be required to call the Ministry of Revenue to seek authorization to seize the product. That doesn't make any sense. That's why we're including a seizure power of tobacco or illegal cigarettes in plain view inside a vehicle if it's pulled over for another traffic offence. These proposed amendments would allow a police officer conducting a lawful search, or who is otherwise carrying out his or her normal duty, to seize illegal cigarettes in plain view without having to call the Ministry of Revenue. This makes sense. It gives it more teeth. To an act that already had teeth it gives a little bit more teeth.

1740

I think we just need to summarize in the last minute why it is that we're doing this. Tobacco kills you. I don't think anyone here is going to quarrel with that. In order to do with tobacco what has been done with other things

that have been phased out over the years takes a gradual, step-by-step approach. There have been innumerable measures down through the last four decades in which the United States and Canada, who led the world, banned smoking and have gradually been squeezing the distribution channels so that it's harder to get, harder to transport, harder to do illegal cigarettes.

This is the latest in a clear, coherent, multi-step plan. It's a plan that's working. It's a plan that's squeezing the distribution chain. It's a plan that's taxing people who break the law. And it's a plan that is ultimately effective to make Ontario smoke-free.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga—Streetsville often makes any arguments often, meaning that he goes on incessantly, and a lot of times people don't listen as effectively as they could.

Now, I think what's important—the real reason here—is that we think it's time to move forward with this. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has urged us to support this and strengthen it. I'm confident that our health critic will be up and add some content to the discussion here.

I talked to Dr. Robert Kyle, the medical officer of health for Durham. Their work on the education component at that level is very important, and that's what I say needs to be done. If you look at the health care challenge in Ontario, indeed in Canada, about 47% of the total spending we record is for health care, but less than a billion dollars is spent on wellness and prevention. If you look at every dollar spent on the prevention side, it accumulates \$3 of value on the health side. Not only that: Think of young people and the unconscionable diseases and the sadness in families because 13,000 people a year in Ontario die from smoke-related problems. That's the real essence of what we're discussing here this afternoon.

Let's get moving forward. You've been eight years. We know that we're supporting it because it is at least a first step. Let's get it done before the election is called.

Now, I don't know if they're going to get it done. I still remain concerned that this House will be dissolved and nothing will happen. I hope that's not the case. There are too many lives at stake. Eight years times 13,000: That's what has happened over the last eight years. Let's get on with this bill and get it done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The numbers are worth repeating: 13,000 people will die. Every 40 minutes somebody dies. This is like an entire city that disappears from the province of Ontario every year.

All that Bill 186 is doing is looking at the supply side. The member kept saying that this act has teeth. It may have teeth to decrease the supply, but to an addict—and no question about it; nicotine is an addiction—the downfall had better be big, because their addiction will tell them to keep taking that risk. The \$100 fine for some people on fixed incomes will be massive, but will it be enough for an addict to switch? My feeling and my experience tell me, "No, this is not what's needed."



The demand for the products is not being addressed at all in Bill 186. All we talked about is the supply chain and how we are going to regulate the supply chain so that we can decrease supply. But if you decrease supply and don't put in any strategy to deal with demand, your overall goal of getting at those 13,000 people a year who die because they use tobacco products is not going to be successful. To be successful, you have to have a strategy that deals with both sides: that deals with the supply and that deals with the demand. Right now Bill 186 is one-sided. It is bound for failure.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I think the member from Mississauga–Streetsville made a very compelling case with regard to the merits of Bill 186 this afternoon.

I've taken the opportunity to talk to Ms. Deb Hammons. Many would know her as the executive director of the Central East LHIN. I know that, over the last number of years that she has held that position, she has certainly been driving that tobacco strategy through the whole area of the Central East LHIN, right from Brighton to Algonquin park and into Scarborough, and has been actively working and putting the strategy in place for tobacco cessation education and programs to make that happen. She needs to be commended for her leadership in that particular area.

I know others want to get rid of her job in the not-too-distant future, but she's been there doing a very great job working with Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, who happens to be the medical officer of health for Peterborough county and city. Her predecessor was Dr. Garry Humphreys, who was also a leader in this area, developing programs so people would quit smoking.

We do know, with a health care budget of some \$47 billion, increasing about 6.5% each and every year, that if we could put more emphasis on the prevention side—again, an area of activity that the Central East LHIN has been very involved in, again under the leadership of Deb Hammons making that happen. We know those kinds of planning activities that go on through the LHINs are supported by a Conservative senator, Wilbert Keon, one of Canada's most outstanding heart surgeons. He's come to the forefront in the last couple of months talking about how we need these programs in place—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** We have been debating Bill 186, the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, all afternoon. I think a number of really valid points have been made on all sides of the Legislature. I think the major concern, though, is that while it goes some way to dealing with this situation, it isn't a balanced strategy, because what we're dealing with here is a very pernicious addiction.

I know the member from Mississauga–Streetsville had some personal anecdotes that were really quite sad about people he knew who had passed away from lung cancer. I guess I have one myself. My own mother passed away

from lung cancer in 1996 because she wasn't able to quit. She has a lifelong smoker, and as the member from Nickel Belt said, it is a terrible way to see someone die.

My concern is really with young people getting hooked on cigarettes and then not being able to stop. It is something that I have certainly warned my own children about. I've actually put the fear of God in them that if they ever start, I will find them and I will find out about it.

But sadly, it's all too available for too many young people who are able to buy baggies of cigarettes out of the trunks of people's cars. We need to have a very serious strategy to combat this. The effects of this aren't going to be known immediately because young people do think that they're invincible and that nothing bad will ever happen to them. But I can tell them from my own personal experience that it can and will catch up to you.

There are some other things that we could be doing, including some strategies to help people quit, because the benefits can be felt even if you quit now after smoking for many years. You can still improve your chances significantly of not getting lung cancer and passing away in that way.

I guess, as a public service message, I would say to people: Please do whatever you can to try to quit, and I urge the government to help people do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Mississauga–Streetsville has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I want to thank the members for Durham, Nickel Belt, Peterborough and Whitby–Oshawa for their helpful comments.

1750

To the member for Durham: I just want to remind him that only two people in the Ontario Legislature voted against the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and the leader of PC Party was one of them.

To my colleague from Nickel Belt: I'm glad she agrees with me that the act has teeth. I refer her to the actual Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the other acts both in our budget and introduced by the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Revenue over the past six years. There she can see the specifics of how Ontario helps smokers kick the habit. As proof, we can see very clearly, year over year over year, that smoking rates are going down.

To my colleague from Peterborough: He can see the outcome where the rubber meets the road, as they say, in the great city of Peterborough. He can see that because he's been consistently so closely involved in his community. On both a macro and a micro level, the member for Peterborough very clearly gets it.

To my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa: I echo her sentiment. Let us continue to be active and non-partisan as legislators and to ensure that no more of our friends and our family die from the single most tragic and preventable cause of cancer in our age. That means doing everything we can, setting our elections, our quarrels and our party policies aside and getting on with everything



we can do to get people to stop smoking and to choke off the supply of cigarettes and tobacco on the supply side all through the distribution chain.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Ted, do you want to?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** No, go ahead.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I get the time after anyway.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 186. I was quite prepared to give up my spot for the member. I thought he had some—you wanted to put it all into one spot. Is that the hope?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** No, go ahead.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** No, no. I just wanted to make sure that you had an opportunity to speak if you wanted to. So I'm using that time—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'll get it wound up, and we'll be able to speak to the points. I can probably make my point in five minutes, and we can get this over with.

Anyway, this is my opportunity to speak to the bill, and the perspective I want to talk about is kind of putting things together. As I've spoken about in this House many times, what legislation actually means is that, at this particular time, these are the pieces of legislation we're looking at to try to go from one spot where we've been to where we want to be. I would suggest very respectfully that to try to capture this as a piece of legislation that doesn't do this for this group or doesn't do that for that group is not looking at it in the perspective of the ongoing saga of cigarette smoking.

At one time, pharmacies used to sell cigarettes in their stores as a way to make money. Quite frankly, they themselves got together, I remind my honourable friends, as a collective will, as health care providers, and said, "We will sell cigarettes no more in these stores." So in any pharmacy that you go to in the province of Ontario, you will not see them selling cigarettes because they've made that choice.

Quite frankly, as we move forward from this point with this piece of legislation, and we make decisions on whether or not it will pass, we will be saying the same things again in the future: that there will be more that needs to be done in order for us to cut down the amount of money we're spending on health care issues regarding smoking.

From the onset, I acknowledge to the House that I've never smoked. I never have, and I never will. My intention was never to get involved in cigarettes because the very first and only time I took a puff on a cigarette as a curious young person, I hacked myself out of the decision on my own, quite frankly. From that moment on, in terms of me being an active individual playing a lot of sports, I saw the results of some people who did smoke and tried to maintain their athletic abilities. I saw them slowly slipping, recognizing that in the long run this smoking thing had something to do with their ability to perform.

Now I come back away from the personal story and suggest that Bill 186 is there for three major purposes. One is to provide additional help for people who are trying to stop smoking by engaging the delivery of smoke cessation resources. So we are talking about one more step inside of that smoke-free Ontario legislation that we passed collectively—almost unanimously, as pointed out by my other colleague who said there were a few people who did vote against this—not very many, by the way—which speaks volumes to the idea that we are after the health care side of this.

But there's a business side to this, and I think we have to acknowledge fairly that since it's not a banned substance, it is for sale. Because it is for sale, I took the perspective of an individual who said, what's the outcome here on this particular issue that we're talking about regarding legitimate sales? They're a business; they have an opportunity to perform, and they've offered their voice and their lobby towards this, and they have every right to do so. For me, I wish they, along with many other people, would try to follow the lead of the pharmacists, who recognize, on the better overall condition of our province of Ontario, that they would change the product that they use as their mainstay of earning an income. I would encourage them to see if there's an evaluation or another way in which we could help them sustain their businesses without selling this product.

That said, I also bring that conversation on to the farmer. When I first met the farmers, back when I was elected in 1999, I had indicated to them that I thought there was a bogeyman in the room, and the bogeyman wasn't politicians, and at the time, I didn't think it was the people who sold the cigarettes. There were others who manufactured the cigarettes who were making some strides to remove the board in its existence, because it protected the price of tobacco.

The other comment that I want to make is that the list of prescription medications for smoking cessation under the Ontario drug benefit formulary, pending successful negotiations with the manufacturer, is another goal in this side of this legislation.

When you try to characterize this as simply the tough side of the contraband issue, the illegal cigarettes, and all we're going to do is get hard on that—those other two functions have not been mentioned very often.

I would suggest respectfully that there is a balance that's trying to be struck here, but we need to continue to work forward, to have our young people stop smoking.

I had mentioned earlier in a two-minuter that when my friend from Nickel Belt and I got together to discuss the possibility of legislating against flavoured tobacco and selling cigarillos as a single entity—let me take just a few seconds to describe what they were. They looked very suspiciously like lip balm and eye makeup, and they smelled not like tobacco; they had a smell of cherry, strawberry, daiquiri, chocolate and vanilla. Can you imagine what a smart kid could do to their parents to trick their parents? They've got these singles for sale; they put them in their backpack. The parents stumble upon them—without looking inside of them, because



they're sealed—and they look at it and they ask the kid, “Daughter X, daughter Y, what's this?” “It's eyeliner. Don't worry about it.” And they can't smell it. You don't smell the tobacco; you smell the flavour. It's a single, so it doesn't have the health warning on it. So if I see it, and it's got a fancy name to it, all the parent is going to say is, “My daughter's got lip balm or eye makeup.”

I wasn't overly impressed with that particular task, and I remember that the member and I handed out samples, with permission from the House, because it was a prop, but we allowed it because they needed to see what the product was. I know that she and myself were just inundated by comments from individuals in the House who didn't have an idea; they didn't have a clue. When they saw that happen, I think that helped sell the case. It was pretty hard to try to say that these little inventions had nothing to do with trying to get kids hooked on tobacco. That in itself is an example of working co-operatively to have the entire House—I believe everybody in this place does not want their kids to start smoking, or their grandchildren or their relatives or kids of school age.

I think we need to continue to have this dialogue to ensure that we try to plug any hole that's in there, and to continue to move the legislation forward that allows us to continue to get us off of that weed.

I do want to talk just for a very short moment on First Nations. I've talked to some of the elders and some of the clan mothers on the strict belief in what tobacco was actually supposed to be about. They're not fans of smoking. As a matter of fact, in my conversations with people from Six Nations, especially the health council inside of the elected council, they have some problems with their young people smoking as well. As a matter of fact, their numbers are higher. What they're looking for is leadership as well, and co-operation, and it's strictly them.

Quite frankly, I know, Speaker, that I said I could do it in five minutes, and I'm probably going to tell you that I can't do it in five minutes because there's a whole history that we have to talk about. I'll defer to your wisdom on when you'd like to have things wrapped up, but I do have more time to spend, and I could spend the next 10 minutes after we come back explaining why the bill is designed the way it is.

I'll defer to the Speaker on this.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. It being 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
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Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
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Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Tony Ruprecht  
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Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day











PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

**Transportation planning**  
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....5782

**Taxation**  
Mr. Michael Prue .....5782

**Photo identification**  
Mr. Bob Delaney .....5783

**Transportation planning**  
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....5783

**Correctional facilities**  
Mr. Peter Kormos.....5783

**Paramedics**  
Mr. Jeff Leal.....5783

**Wind turbines**  
Mr. Toby Barrett .....5783

**Correctional facilities**  
Mr. Michael Prue .....5784

**Replacement workers**  
Mr. Jim Brownell .....5784

**Travailleurs suppléants**  
Mme France Gélinas .....5784

**Paramedics**  
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....5784

**Taxation**  
Mr. Peter Kormos.....5785

**Paramedics**  
Mr. Phil McNeely .....5785

**Gasoline prices**  
Mr. John Yakabuski .....5785

**Cemeteries**  
Mr. Jim Brownell .....5785

**Paramedics**  
Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....5785

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing  
Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011, Bill 186,  
Ms. Aggelonitis / Loi de 2011 appuyant la stratégie**

**Ontario sans fumée par la réduction du tabac de  
contrebande, projet de loi 186, Mme Aggelonitis**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....5786

Mme France Gélinas .....5794

Mr. Phil McNeely.....5794

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....5794

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5795

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....5795

Mme France Gélinas .....5796

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5802

Mr. John O’Toole.....5802

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5803

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....5803

Mme France Gélinas .....5803

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....5803

Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....5805

Mme France Gélinas .....5805

Mr. Jeff Leal.....5806

Mr. John O’Toole.....5806

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....5806

Mr. John O’Toole.....5807

Mme France Gélinas .....5810

Mr. Dave Levac.....5810

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....5810

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5810

Mr. John O’Toole.....5811

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5811

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5814

Mme France Gélinas .....5814

Mr. John O’Toole .....5815

L’hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....5815

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5815

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5815

Mr. John O’Toole.....5818

Mme France Gélinas .....5818

Mr. Jeff Leal.....5819

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....5819

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5819

Mr. Dave Levac.....5820

Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....5821

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Monday 9 May 2011 / Lundi 9 mai 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5769
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5769
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	5769
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5769
Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5769
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5769
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5769
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5769

### **ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES**

#### **Ontario public service**

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5769
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5769

#### **Taxation**

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5770
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5770

#### **Freedom of information**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5771
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5771

#### **Freedom of information**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5772
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5772

#### **Ontario public service**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5772
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5772

#### **Child care**

Mr. Michael Prue .....	5773
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5773

#### **Government services**

Mr. Dave Levac.....	5773
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	5773

#### **Student achievement**

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5774
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5774

#### **Coroner's inquest**

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5774
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5775

#### **Human rights**

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5775
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5775

#### **Apprenticeship training**

Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5776
Hon. John Milloy .....	5776

### **Correctional facilities**

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5776
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5776

### **Transportation planning**

Mr. Ted McMeekin .....	5777
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5777

### **Assistance to farmers**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5777
Hon. Carol Mitchell.....	5778

### **Children's aid societies**

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5778
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5778

### **Tourism**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	5779
Hon. Michael Chan .....	5779

### **Environmental protection**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5779
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5779

### **Correction of record**

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5779
-------------------------------	------

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

#### **Ontario Greenhouse Alliance**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5780
-------------------------	------

#### **Long-term care**

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5780
-----------------------	------

#### **Rotary Cheshire Homes and Canadian Helen Keller Centre**

Mr. David Zimmer .....	5780
------------------------	------

#### **Pembroke Lumber Kings**

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5780
--------------------------	------

#### **Ordre de la Pléiade**

M. Phil McNeely .....	5781
-----------------------	------

#### **Samantha Attew**

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5781
-------------------------	------

#### **South Asian Heritage Month**

Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	5781
----------------------	------

#### **Smoke-free Ontario**

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5782
------------------------	------

#### **European Union anniversary**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	5782
------------------------	------

#### **Visitors**

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5782
---------------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*





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of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 10 May 2011**

**Mardi 10 mai 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 May 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Buddhist prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BETTER TOMORROW FOR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR DES LENDEMAINS MEILLEURS POUR L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Phillips, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 173, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I will be relatively brief, in that my colleague the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Finance will want to speak more fully on this. Briefly, the budget, and then the budget bill which implements the portions of the budget that need legislation, are designed to accomplish, really, among other things, five key things.

To continue to see job creation: I think members on all sides were very happy last Friday with the job creation numbers that we saw in the province of Ontario. Ontario now has recovered all the jobs lost in the recession, which is, by the way, not the case in other jurisdictions—in the US, in the UK and elsewhere. That was good news on Friday, and I think it indicates that the economy has turned the corner. We look forward to a continuation of job creation.

The budget bill also protects many of the important things that we want to see in education: the addition of, I think, 60,000 additional college and university spaces—very much an investment for Ontario's future—and the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

We're also continuing to make progress in the health care area, with 90,000 more breast cancer screening exams and something that the committee on mental health, the all-party committee, strongly recommended,

and that is significant advances in children's mental health. It's certainly something all of us heard in the pre-budget consultations.

Also, the budget bill helps to continue with the plan to eliminate our deficit. The 2010-11 deficit is now \$3 billion lower than we forecast a year ago, which is good news. We have a plan in the budget and the budget bill to eliminate the deficit. We have a very well-regarded Ontario individual, called Don Drummond, who has terrific background experience and who will be looking at something called the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services. We look forward to his work.

Finally, the budget bill and the budget have a solid plan for eliminating the deficit but, at the same time, protecting what we regard as essential public services: the education area, health care, infrastructure, our relationship with our municipalities, the environment and elsewhere.

With those brief remarks, the debate will continue. As I say, I look forward to our parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Finance speaking further on this this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to be able to join in the debate today on Bill 173, the budget bill. I should note right off the top that it's a big bill—I've got the binder on it right here—with some 41 different schedules. Of course, it's been time-allocated, so for third reading we have all of an hour to debate it. It means, with sharing my time with my other committee member, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, I get all of 10 minutes to discuss this bill.

There was all of one day of public hearings, with very little notice, so as a member of the public or someone interested in the budget process you had to be on your toes to even know that it was happening and be quick enough to be able to make a submission. Despite that, we did have one full day of public hearings, but certainly the new theme for the government these days seems to be secrecy, and I'll discuss that as it relates to this bill.

We just learned this week, with regard to the wage freeze announced in last year's budget, that the McGuinty government actually had signed a deal with OPSEU, affecting some 38,000 people, that gives them a secret pay increase of 1% in 2012—conveniently beyond the next election.

We look at the track record of this government: They passed the G20 law in secrecy, and the general public was in the dark about that particular law. As the oppos-

ition, we continue to ask questions about the secret Samsung deal, the \$7-billion deal that is sure to drive electricity bills that families and seniors are paying even higher. We've been asking questions after the sunshine list came out and Ron Sapsford, who hasn't worked for the Ministry of Health for a couple of years, appeared on it. I believe he received \$762,000 last year, but it seems to be a secret why he received this money. We've been asking questions about that. It goes on and on: the details of the government's change of mind on the Oakville generation plant. There are many, many more examples.

But as it pertains to this bill, in the short time I have available to speak: Of the 41 schedules, schedule 15 garnered the most interest at the public hearings stage. That has to do with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; an exemption under FIPPA for health care professionals on hospital committees to ensure medical concerns are encouraged; to enable evaluation of quality of health care programs and services provided by a hospital. There was a tremendous volume of feedback to the inclusion of this schedule from individuals and families.

It is increasingly clear that the health care community is divided on the topic of FIPPA exemptions provided in schedule 15. Registered nurses, the Ontario Nurses' Association, are against exempting hospital committees from freedom-of-information requests. I received more than 500 emails from nurses absolutely opposed to this secrecy provision in schedule 15. One of those reads:

"I write to record my belief that the hospital secrecy amendment is harmful to public trust in the health care system. It undermines transparency and accountability. The process by which this amendment is now buried in budget Bill 173 is anti-democratic. If this amendment passes, I believe that the information which will be off limits may put lives at risk." That's from one of the 500 nurses that I received emails from.

0910

I was also copied on another letter from the Service Employees International Union, one of the top health care unions in Canada. They represent more than 50,000 health care and community service workers across the country. You'd think the people working the system might be opposed to this transparency that would come about, but they're very much against this hospital secrecy provision. Here is some of what they had to say to the head of the Ontario Hospital Association:

"We welcome your effort at open dialogue, and always appreciate the opportunity for constructive engagement with fellow health care stakeholders. Indeed, we encourage the CEOs of Ontario hospitals to extend this same spirit of openness to the public when information about quality of care is being requested. We [the SEIU] are committed to improving value and quality for Ontarians through evidence-based health care.

"Giving CEOs back the power to exempt information on quality from public disclosure would seriously undermine this progress, weakening accountability and undermining the drive for quality. That is why we are encour-

aging hospitals CEOs to embrace change and accept that the culture of entitlement and secrecy must end. Indeed, as an organization that receives public funding and plays such a key role in our public hospital system, we would encourage the OHA itself to meet the same standards of transparency expected of its members and voluntarily submit itself to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

"Evidence-based research on quality of care improvement efforts directs us to the fact that it is in the interest of Ontarians that hospitals disclose all quality data—excluding identifying information—so the public knows what publicly funded hospitals are doing to improve quality of care in their facilities. Current legislation ensures the protection of hospital medical staff and the support of a safe environment to discuss quality of care improvement efforts.

"Schedule 15 will hinder quality improvement efforts in hospitals. Simply put, there is abundant evidence that opening hospital performance data will improve quality of care."

That's signed by Eoin Callan, SEIU health care.

As I mentioned earlier, families are writing to express concern. I've received this email from a parent:

"I have been made aware of Bill 173 s15 that you are trying to pass. As a mother of an autistic child I am horrified at the implication of secrecy.

"My career is in the health care field and I am so against the legislation taking effect....

"Nurses and doctors should not be allowed to hide any information of patients suffering or dying from their errors, lack of judgment or negligence. Health care professionals should not be excused from this.

"This is so terrifying and has to be stopped. It affects all of our lives."

I think the lack of transparency that hundreds are writing to us about is a very real concern. It's a point that was underscored again last week, as I mentioned previously, with the news about Mr. McGuinty's secret wage deal for Ontario public service employees: an adjustment of 1% on top of a scheduled wage increase of 2% for 2012. That's in contrast to Mr. McGuinty's statement on the need to rein in spending.

The document came to light because the chairwoman of the Ontario Labour Relations Board rejected the government's request to permanently seal records of an adjustment that is over and above a four-year collective agreement struck between OPSEU and the government back in 2008. It has many employers wondering out loud about the other side deals that the McGuinty government has made. We asked a question yesterday in the Legislature about the many groups supporting the Working Families Coalition; if they're getting special deals on the side from the McGuinty government that are, once again, secret.

The chair of the Toronto Police Services Board said, "It doesn't help anybody when there has been a secret arrangement that has to come out in this way."

The CEO of Windsor Regional Hospital commented that the deal makes it difficult for him to continue



preaching restraint at his hospital, where non-unionized workers' pay has been frozen for five years. This back-room deal is just another example of the secretive nature of the McGuinty government.

Madam Speaker, I can see I'm just about out of time, so I'm not even going to be able to get through my prepared notes. I would just like to talk about some other schedules briefly in the minute and a half I have left.

Schedule 17 is the Gaming Control Act. It sets gaming standards and requires the OLGC to follow registrar standards for rules of play and regulation. It incorporates gaming-related offences.

We heard from Dave Bryans, president of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. He commented that this schedule appears to be quietly opening the floodgates for Internet gaming without the announced consultation process with all stakeholders. They want to know if the consultation promised by the government in the area of Internet gaming will proceed. That's certainly a valid concern, whether it's just going to be another secret process.

Just like the last finance bill, this has many, many different schedules; there are 41 in total. Schedule 14 makes changes to the Estate Administration Tax Act. That's another one that looks like it's a vehicle to collect more tax. Schedule 33 authorizes new borrowing of \$28.3 billion to feed the McGuinty government's tax-and-spend ways.

I've mentioned that they've failed at restraint so that they're again going to have a double-digit deficit this year of some \$16 billion. They borrowed \$39 billion last year. They're on track to double the debt of the province, spending \$10.2 billion on interest this year to service the debt they've built up. That's more than they spend on the whole post-secondary education sector. This bill allows them to borrow another \$28.3 billion to continue with their tax-and-spend ways.

Madam Speaker, so that I allow time for the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, I will conclude that the PC Party will not be supporting this McGuinty government budget bill that facilitates their overspending tax-and-spend ways and allows them to continue with their hospital secrecy provisions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? We're going in rotation. Are you going to go?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We're sharing time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Okay. The member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** We're supposed to go in rotation.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Whatever you'd like.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Tabuns.

My point in this debate, to borrow from the title of the bill, is that transparency is key to a healthy tomorrow for Ontario. Sunshine is the best disinfectant, and while most budget deliberations obviously focus on spending plans, our finance committee proceedings were sidetracked recently by a two-line amendment this government hoped to bury. I'm referring to the hospital secrecy law that was snuck in by this McGuinty government. Schedule 15 of Bill 173, the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act, changes the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Act and does threaten to derail transparency and accountability measures that were gained just a few months ago, just before Christmas.

As far as schedule 15 goes, it's an amendment to FIPPA, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It's a small, fairly discreet line in the overall budget bill, but it's one that has garnered considerable attention, as we just heard from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. For example, I'd suggest people Twitter Cybele Sack at Right2SafeCare.

Originally, Bill 122 was brought in to clean house after the eHealth scandal, put hospitals under FIPPA and ban the use of taxpayer-funded lobbyists. Here we are today with a hospital secrecy bill buried in a budget. It's clearly not a budgetary item—and this is alarming; it's not a budgetary item at all. Schedule 15 has no business being in this legislation. That's why we voted against it. We truly question the placement of this line in the budget bill.

We understand that there are groups that lobbied for this in the legislation. They did so without any public consultation. None of them testified before the finance committee. We only had one day of hearings, on short notice. People had very little time to prepare.

As I've indicated, this amendment takes aim at hospital transparency measures—as were called for just last December in the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act—to enable hospitals to shield from public scrutiny any information about quality of care produced for or by a hospital committee. Some may recall that the 2010 accountability act was a response, again, to that series of revelations that offended taxpayers: the lavish spending by consultants and executives and, of course, the eHealth scandal.

0920

Now we have this amendment, introduced March 29. It was introduced due to what the Minister of Health publicly acknowledged was a campaign of persuasion on the part of hospital CEOs. We heard in committee that CEOs took in 10% to 14% pay increases at a time when hospital budgets were increasing by about 1.5%. At the time, the Minister of Health described the accountability act as a process of pulling out the fridge to see what's behind: "It's not something you want to do, there might be a mess back there, but at the end of the day, it has to be done." And again, as I heard on committee, "You have to bring sunlight and you have to be ready to expose and to clean up misuse of public funds that would otherwise erode public confidence." Again, I'll quote Louis Brandeis: "Sunshine is the best disinfectant."

But now, five months forward, on the finance committee, both PC colleague Norm Miller, NDP Peter Tabuns and myself were outvoted in our attempt to delete schedule 15, clearly a government move to block that sunshine I was talking about and reverse themselves as far as cleaning up the mess behind the refrigerator.

A number of witnesses came forward, a number from my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. Dunnville's Ed Vander Vegte pointed out to members of the committee that



"access to all medical records is necessary to determine if negligence has indeed occurred. Access to medical information is also necessary to determine if the negligence is ongoing and how many patients have been affected."

Another constituent, Kim Hessels from Dunnville, testified that schedule 15 appears to "discriminate against the vulnerable as they prioritize resources above patient safety...."

"It seems clear to me that schedule 15 will prevent me and others from gaining access to documents to better understand how our hospitals are run regarding who gets care and who does not."

Adding to the secrecy concerns was the recent report from a large law firm advising hospitals to avoid any eHealth-type scandals by "cleansing" files before they become publicly available. There was a four-page memo that said hospitals face "significant reputational risks" from freedom of information legislation and they advised hospitals to consider "cleansing existing files on or before December 31, 2011."

It is worth noting that a year ago, we in opposition introduced the Truth in Government Act, proposing measures to create more openness and more accountability across all of government, including hospitals. Regrettably, at the time, government members voted against taxpayer protection and the greater accountability measures that were found in that particular piece of legislation.

As Kim Hessels concluded in her deputation before the finance committee, "I believe it is time for Ontario citizens to have full transparency and accountability in all matters related to the health care they receive...."

"We may not have all the answers or the right answers, but as parents and as citizens, we'd like to be involved."

Here is another opinion. This is from Ken Anderson. He's from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. I'll quote Ken Anderson: "I would like to emphasize that designating hospitals as institutions under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act would not interfere with the effective and efficient delivery of health care."

As we were told during hearings, if you want to ensure open, accountable and transparent hospitals and to embrace the spirit of freedom of information legislation, you'll stop Bill 173.

This from Justice La Forest of the Supreme Court of Canada: "The overarching purpose of access-to-information legislation is to facilitate democracy." It helps "to ensure that citizens have the information required to participate meaningfully in the democratic process and that politicians and bureaucrats remain accountable to the citizenry."

Just to wrap up, our system of democracy and our access to information are being subverted by an amendment like this hospital secrecy law. The public needs access to hospital quality information so they can shed light on the problems and work with government and with all concerned to fix them. No more hiding—not by

cleansing records and not by bringing in this hospital secrecy law.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to rise today, and I want to note that Madame Gélinas will be speaking as well to this bill. We will be sharing our time.

Mr. Phillips, the minister without portfolio, started off his speech by talking about what are seen by the Liberals as their accomplishments in government. He talked about the recovery of jobs lost in the recession. I want to note that prior to the recession, it was widely recognized and documented statistically that we had lost 200,000 good-paying jobs in Ontario. Those jobs have not been recovered.

If in fact you look at job creation in this province over the last few years, a very large percentage of the jobs that have been created are part-time, insecure, low-paying jobs. What we have seen with this government in its term in office is an ongoing decline of some of the basic economic components of Ontario's prosperity. What we have seen is a reduction in the standard of living and in the well-being of families across this province, most sharply expressed in areas like northern Ontario, Windsor and the Niagara region. That is not a record to be proud of.

The government spoke about the number of spaces that have been created in colleges and universities. This morning I was listening to Metro Morning: a labour market specialist talking about how many of those people who graduated are now serving coffee or working at the sock counter in Walmart. People who have spent a lot of money and invested a lot of time to get an education are now carrying this huge debt burden and are not able to get the kind of work that reflects their skills, their commitment and what they could actually give to this society. That reduction in opportunities, that burden of debt put on the next generation, is a huge waste of the talent of the people of this province and an injustice to young people in Ontario who have been stuck with a debt that they will have a great deal of difficulty paying off in the years to come. In some quarters, some authors and some social commentators are starting to refer to this generation as the lost generation: people whose skills and talents are not being employed.

I want to say that this government as well speaks to the whole question of all-day kindergarten, talks to the implementation—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It seems that some on the other side are a bit thin-skinned when we talk about their real record. They get a bit thin-skinned.

When we talk about all-day kindergarten—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker.

When we talk about all-day kindergarten and the implementation of Dr. Charles Pascal's vision, what we have in fact from this government is a cherry-picking of some elements that need to be there. I think it makes



sense to expand all-day learning so that more children are allowed to attend, but there is an important part that was forgotten when that program was put in place.

0930

That important part is the existence of the current regime, the current network of daycare centres. I talked to those parents. I've gone and talked to the administrators. Time after time after time, I'm told that those daycare centres are imperilled by rising costs because the four-year-olds and five-year-olds who move out of those centres into all-day kindergarten are going to have to be replaced by younger children, whose care is more expensive. Parents who are already facing substantial burdens with the cost of child care are facing even higher costs.

This government has not addressed their plight. Many of them, even if they could have their parents afford to pay the higher fees, find themselves in a situation where they don't have the capital dollars to rebuild their centres so they can accommodate the younger children. They need more nap rooms, they need more washroom and cleaning facilities, and they need more natural light—all of which are reasonable but none of which have been provided for. In fact, we may see a greater lack of availability of child care spaces for many people in this society than we had in the past. That is rolling backwards.

This budget bill is meant to implement a budget that has been debated earlier in this Legislature, a budget that brings into place corporate tax cuts that continue a process that has gone on throughout this decade of reducing the share the corporations pay to make sure that our health care system is in place, that we have law enforcement and that we have the social services necessary to deal with those in our society who are vulnerable. Those corporate tax cuts have been matched at the same time, according to Statistics Canada, with an ongoing decline in investment in Ontario and across this country. We have seen a decline in investment in plants and machinery.

There is not a benefit that comes in economic investment from those corporate tax cuts, and yet this government continues in that race to the bottom, undermining our economic well-being, undermining the formation of capital needed to actually make ours a successful economy. This government has decided to buy into a particular ideology that doesn't reflect the reality of how companies invest and why they invest in jurisdictions. They invest in places that are well run and that have predictable returns on investment. They invest in places where people are well trained. They don't invest in places where things start coming apart because there isn't enough money in the public sector, in the larger infrastructure, to actually allow them to function well.

The bill that we have here has a section, 14, addressing all-day kindergarten. There is a great problem in that the funds weren't provided to schools to provide after-school care, before-school care and summer care for children.

This bill allows third party operators into the schools to provide that care. What this bill also provides is that

those operators can be for-profit child care. This is a major break with the history of this province. This is a major break in our commitment to our children.

You can have the legislative library do the research for you. You can go to social commentators. You can go to universities and to academics who specialize in early childhood education. Study after study after study shows that non-profit and publicly-run daycare is of higher quality and has better outcomes for children.

But that isn't assured in this bill. In fact, what happens in this bill is that the door is thrown open to for-profit child educators. The Walmarts of child care now have no legal impediment to going in and setting up in schools. When you talk to people in the child care sector, what that says to them is that there will be an incredible push-down in qualifications, in quality and in wages.

This is a major mistake on the part of this government—a major mistake. This should not have been in this bill. The amendment that I put forward saying that the daycare providers had to be non-profit or municipal was rejected by this government. That is a mistake and a turning of the back on the children and families of this province.

Schedule 32 of this bill, the bringing together of Infrastructure Ontario, Ontario lands and a number of other subsidiary corporations: We see this as the opening of the door to P3s, public-private partnerships, on a far broader scale than we've seen in the past. Infrastructure Ontario has become anonymous—synonymous, sorry; anonymous only in some circles—synonymous with public-private partnerships. Again, the reality, shown by organizations like the Ontario Health Coalition, is that what you get out of those—and we've seen this in the hospital sector—is less hospital care and higher costs. This model, which allows governments to move costs off their balance sheet, puts the burden back on patients and puts the burden back on society. This move by the government will make this society more expensive and will ensure that it has fewer services in health care and in other fields. That was a major mistake in this bill.

Schedule 15, which my colleague Madame Gélinas will speak to, about freedom of information in hospitals—she will talk about the hospitals. I will just note that yesterday we raised this whole question of the politicization of the freedom-of-information process. That whole covering-up of information seems to be a central part of this government's operational strategy. No one should be surprised—no one should be happy, but no one should be surprised—that this was appended to a budget bill. It's pretty standard operating procedure that we've seen over the last number of years.

The whole question of the commission on the reform of public services: There are a number of ways one can look at this. I think that what we should expect from it is a commission that will propose a further hollowing-out of public services in Ontario.

I note that it reports after the October 6 election, so in pamphlets, in flyers and in television ads the government can say, "We have a plan. We're working on it. Some-



thing good will happen.” But I think the simple reality is that this is another step forward in making Ontario less effective in the provision of public services, a jurisdiction that will not have the depth in its public service to carry out the functions—protection of the environment, promotion of good health, protection of public health—that it actually needs. That is a huge problem with this bill.

I want to say that this government, when it was elected, was given an electricity system that was partially privatized, on its way to full privatization; an electricity system in which energy traders started calling the shots; an electricity system in which private power operators could make money by turning their plants on and off, driving up the price of electricity. I’m saying that because the Ontario Energy Board recently noted that there were private power operators in Ontario who were turning off their plants and turning them on again to get bonuses, to get extra money. They estimated the loss of revenue to the people of Ontario in the tens of millions.

0940

A study earlier this year, reported in the *Toronto Star*, noted that Ontarians were subsidizing private power traders to the tune of \$200 million a year over a five-year period—a billion dollars. That is the kind of economic gains that this government has been engaged in: a bleeding of cash out of the pockets of ordinary Ontarians, an undermining of our economic prosperity to help those who they deem to be closer to them politically and closer to them economically, but certainly not those who are building this province and who need to have the health care, the social services, the education and the social supports to engage in society-building.

I urge everyone in this Legislature to vote against this budget bill. It’s a bill that promotes secrecy, that undermines public child care, that undermines public ownership and financing of hospitals, and that advances an agenda that is making Ontario, or will make Ontario, a less prosperous place, a less promising place. This budget is not one that anyone can be proud of.

Thank you, and I will turn my time over to my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to take people back to the fall of 2010—actually, before this—when we were reading the headlines as to people finding out about hospitals using lobbyists and consultants. I asked the Auditor General to do a study and to look at how much money our hospitals and other health care agencies were spending on lobbyists and on consultants, and he did. He did a good job. He looked at what was happening and he tabled his report in this House last fall.

The findings were rather disappointing, to say the least. It is one of those that we can call a scathing report, where we saw that millions of dollars handled by our health care system that we thought had been invested into care were really going to well-connected consultants, were going to lobbyists who had nothing to do with care at all.

The government reacted, and they reacted quickly. They brought forward a new bill where they banned that kind of behaviour and where they promised, after years of lobbying, that hospitals would finally be brought under freedom of access of information. You see, people have been waiting for a long time to find out what is going on in our hospitals. Life and death happen in our hospitals every day. It’s happening right now. It is happening under the care of human beings who, like every other human being on earth, make mistakes. Yet people who need closure, people who have gone through an event, who have put in a complaint and had the hospitals look after this complaint, could not get closure. They could never get the full information of what is going on in our hospitals. They can turn to the Ombudsman all they want; the Ombudsman doesn’t have jurisdiction over our hospitals.

But finally, with this bill, freedom of access of information was to come. Hospitals were to be covered as of 2012—after the election, I know, but at least it was coming. There was hope at the end of the tunnel. And then, while we were talking on the bill, they tried to backtrack. Good for us: They needed unanimous consent. I was there and I did not give unanimous consent. This idea of backtracking on something that we had been waiting such a long time for—there was no way I was having any part of this. Hospitals were to come under freedom of access of information, and this is the way it should be.

Then came the budget. I read the French part; it’s 300 pages. Buried in there, in one little wee paragraph that has nothing to do with budgeting, they were taking a big part of hospital information away from freedom of access of information. What we have been waiting for so many years to get, what all of those families out there who need closure because of an adverse effect—they were not going to get closure anymore. They were not going to, and it was in a budget, of all places.

Then the budget bill comes out, Bill 173, and here it is on page 31 in black and white for all to see: What we had waited such a long time for is going to be taken away. It’s going to be taken away because now we are giving the hospitals an out—and this out can be as huge as a Mack truck, if you want it to be. They say that if it has to do with quality improvement, you don’t have to share it with the people. Well, let me tell you what that turns out to be.

Many hospitals in Ontario practise what we call continuous quality improvement—we call it CQI—which basically means that everything we do, every step we take, every movement we make, every act we do in the hospitals is made to improve quality. This is a very good concept: It drives quality; it improves the care that people in hospitals give to people. But what does that mean? That means that everything they do and everything they say can be labelled as “improving quality,” and with schedule 15 it won’t be accessible to freedom of information anymore. That means that everything a hospital does is not covered by FOI, and we’re back to square one.



**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure this morning, on behalf of my colleague the Honourable Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance, to rise to speak on Bill 173, the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act, 2011.

In the 2011 Ontario budget, the McGuinty government is building on the progress that we've already made. Since our government took office in 2003, we've remained firm in our commitment to improve the provincial economy and to protect the public services that the people of Ontario have come to rely upon.

Our government's record speaks for itself. To make Ontario's economy more competitive for current and future generations, we've modernized Ontario's tax system. We've rebuilt the electricity system into one that is clean, modern and reliable. Our government has repaired and rebuilt the province's schools, colleges and universities; our hospitals; and our roads and bridges after years of neglect. We've partnered with private sector businesses to help create and protect job growth, as well as to ensure a strong climate for investment in Ontario. Our government has also increased the number of students in our world-class post-secondary institutions. We have enhanced skills training to help our unemployed workers find new careers.

The Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act includes measures to build on the progress that we've already made in these areas. The McGuinty government has a realistic and responsible plan to eliminate the deficit while protecting our schools and hospitals and also promoting economic growth. Ontario's success depends on it. Our government is tackling the deficit with determination but not putting our vital public services at risk or resorting to any arbitrary or across-the-board cuts.

We just don't believe that we can cut our way to a better tomorrow. You just can't take billions of dollars out of government revenue streams and not compromise vital front-line services that our Ontario families rely upon.

We have a plan, and that plan is realistic, it's responsible and it's focused on people. The McGuinty government's plan is all about ensuring that we invest in Ontarians by giving them the best education, the best health care, the best infrastructure, the best electricity supply and the best tax advantages that we can. Throughout the global economic recession, we never lost focus on what's important: That's Ontario families, businesses, jobs and our economic growth.

The recent job numbers from Statistics Canada show that our plan is working. In April alone, Ontario's employment jumped by almost 55,000 new jobs. We've now regained 114% of the jobs that were lost during the recession. Our government is also accelerating its plan to enhance public sector efficiency and improve productivity by streamlining programs and identifying new models of service delivery. We will continue to explore new ways to export, to create value from Ontario's excellence in delivering those public services that are recognized as being the best in the world.

**0950**

From Glengarry–Prescott–Russell to Kenora to Chatham–Kent–Essex to Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and even Kitchener–Conestoga, we have listened to Ontarians and put together a responsible plan. With this in mind, we're building on our plan to return Ontario's finances to balance while, at the same time, protecting the gains that we have made since coming into office. Our government is committed to improving Ontario's economy to make it more competitive, both currently and for future generations. We will assure ourselves of a good quality of life and build a brighter future for our children and for our grandchildren.

Full-day kindergarten is a particularly noteworthy measure contained in this bill. We've known for a long time that a strong start in school makes for a strong finish. A child's early formative years are the cornerstone for their future, and that is why the McGuinty government chose to introduce full-day kindergarten. It's a key part of the government's plan to help Ontario's children get the best possible start and, of course, to help busy parents save time and money. This school year, full-day kindergarten is available in about 600 schools, for up to 35,000 Ontario children. In September 2011, it will be available in an additional 200 schools, benefiting up to 50,000 children. The program will be fully in place by September 2014, benefiting about 247,000 children in the province of Ontario. It's the first program of its kind in North America and we're very proud of that achievement.

Our education system is consistently ranked best in the world. This new program will further enhance our reputation as a global leader. From kindergarten to graduate school, our government has chosen to protect and strengthen publicly funded education because we believe that education is essential economic policy. Better education for Ontario children today will mean a more productive and globally competitive workforce for tomorrow.

Our government is committed to openness, fairness and transparency. The new Broader Public Sector Accountability Act introduces tough expense and procurement rules for designated broader public sector organizations. The act ensures fair, open and competitive procurement processes when purchasing goods and services with public funds. The act bans the practice of hiring external lobbyists using public funds, establishes new procurement and expense claim rules for designated broader public sector organizations, and adds accountability measures related to compliance. The broader public sector procurement directive includes a code of ethics and 25 mandatory requirements. The directive is based on the principles of accountability, transparency, value for money, quality service delivery, and process standardization. Our government is committed to establishing clear and consistent rules for procurement in the broader public sector. The broader public sector expense directive also improves accountability and transparency by requiring designated broader public sector organizations to establish expense rules where expenses are



reimbursed from public funds and setting out requirements for what needs to be included in each organization's expense rules.

The directive serves as a guideline to all other publicly funded organizations as defined under the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act. Through this bill, our government is also introducing amendments to eliminate what are commonly known as perks in the broader public sector. These amendments, if enacted, would authorize the Management Board of Cabinet to issue directives on perks. For example, these could include club memberships or seasons' tickets.

Since taking office in 2003, we've brought efficiency and accountability to government and the broader public sector. We remain committed to finding greater efficiencies in the way that government operates in Ontario, and that's why we're seeking to transform the way that government delivers services to people.

The McGuinty government is moving forward with its plan to reduce the number of classified government agencies by 5%. In total, 14 agencies are expected to be closed or merged this year. Some agencies have functions that could be performed within government or cease to exist, and some have overlapping responsibilities or could be amalgamated. These measures include combining the Stadium Corp. of Ontario into the proposed Infrastructure Ontario and Ontario Realty Corp. merger. The new merged entity would be responsible for disposing of the real estate assets currently owned by the Stadium Corp., which will maximize the return to taxpayers. Furthermore, we're merging the Ontario Mortgage Corp. and the Ontario Mortgage Housing Corp.

The province has also accepted the recommendations made by Rita Burak in her December 2010 Report of the Special Advisor on Agencies. Greater efficiencies, service levels and accountability will result from the implementation of her report's recommendations. Indeed, these measures are all part of the government's Open Ontario plan, which will improve accountability, eliminate waste and find savings across government.

These actions build on the steps the Ontario government has already taken, requiring agencies to be more accountable and more transparent and to follow strong governance and expense rules. We will continue to meet and exceed targets to get value out of every dollar and focus funds on the priorities of Ontario families.

As we turn the corner following the economic downturn, our government will continue to invest in people and invest in job creation. Just as we modernized Ontario's tax system to help our businesses compete in the global economy, we cut personal income taxes and we introduced a wide range of tax credits and benefits that give money back to the people.

With the changes that we've made, households with income under \$90,000, representing over two thirds of the households, will, on average, have more money in their pockets. It's just one example of how we're helping people. As part of Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, the government is providing about \$1.4 billion annually

in additional assistance to low- to moderate-income people through the Ontario sales tax credit, the Ontario energy and property tax credit and the northern Ontario energy credit.

In order to help low- to moderate-income families and single people better manage their household budgets, our government is proposing to combine the payment of these three refundable credits by creating the Ontario Trillium benefit. Starting in July 2012, we plan on delivering the combined payments monthly, instead of quarterly. The Ontario Trillium benefit would make it easier for low- to moderate-income Ontario families to make ends meet. We're also proposing to make technical amendments to other tax credits or benefits to make it easier for people to get money back into their pockets.

Through all of these measures, our government is making life just a little bit easier for the people of Ontario. Our plan for the economy is all about giving Ontario families and businesses what they need to succeed. In order to turn the corner to a better tomorrow, we must continue to invest in each other, in people and in partnerships.

Our government is also introducing a new section to the Pension Benefits Act. Pensioners affected by the bankruptcy of Nortel and the termination of the Nortel plans have asked the government to provide them with additional choice for receiving their benefits. Nortel pensioners have clearly indicated that they want a choice, and we've listened to them attentively and acknowledged their request. As a result, we propose to provide Nortel pensioners with the choice of an annuity purchase or a transfer to a life income fund account.

Amendments to the Pension Benefits Act that are proposed would allow Nortel pensioners to opt out of the current windup process and transfer to the lump-sum value of their pensions to a life income fund where they can manage their own account. Pensioners who choose to transfer their pensions to a life income fund would be able to select their own investment strategy, which would be subject to the limits on eligible investments under the federal Income Tax Act.

Our government has remained consistent in our view. The security of retirees' pensions is paramount. The McGuinty government is moving forward with a solution that respects pensioners' choice, coupled with appropriate information and disclosure. Once again, we're focused on ensuring a brighter future for the proud people of this province.

Ontario is turning a corner to a better tomorrow. The economy is improving and jobs are coming back. Furthermore, strategic investments in front-line services have laid the foundation for a future with increased productivity and a better quality of life for the people of Ontario.

Over the past seven years our government has made significant progress. We've improved the fundamentals: education, health care, infrastructure, electricity and the tax system—the foundation upon which the highly skilled, highly educated workforce in this province has



been called upon to compete. Beyond the fundamentals we are introducing exciting new programs, projects and initiatives to ensure Ontario's lasting prosperity.

The measures I've described today represent only a part of the proposed budget measures being introduced through this bill. They are inherently reflective of our government's realistic and achievable plan to secure the province's long-term financial sustainability as well as our determination to protect the public services upon which the people of Ontario rely.

I strongly urge everyone in this House to vote for and support the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011. Not only will these budget measures make Ontario stronger and make Ontario more competitive, but they will ensure our ongoing success. This province's great strength is its people. It's their talent, it's their drive, it's their relentless determination to succeed that makes Ontario so strong. Together we will overcome the mutual challenges that we face and move on to a better tomorrow.

For all of these reasons, I'm proud to support this bill, the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011. I ask all members of the House to support the act and to vote in favour.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 13, 2011, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

## SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 18, 2011, on the motion by Ms. Broten to locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

Seeing none, Ms. Broten has moved government notice of motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The vote will be deferred to the deferred votes after question period.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** No further business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1004 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm pleased to introduce some people from the Niagara region. This is Niagara Week, so I invite all my colleagues to make sure you attend tonight's event. There will be some great liquid refreshments and some great Ontario-grown foods here from Niagara.

I'm pleased to introduce Dr. Valerie Jaeger and, as well, Cathy Cousins; Councillor Brian Baty, regional councillor; the chair of the Niagara region and former lord mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Gary Burroughs; the mayor from my riding of Fort Erie, Mayor Doug Martin; and Patrick Robson. As well, I'd like to introduce a former member—I keep telling him he's going to be a member again—and that's my good friend Bart Maves. Bart, it's nice to have you back here.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Visiting us from Ottawa in the west members' gallery is Jay Shaw. Jay used to work for Minister Jim Watson and Minister Peter Fonseca. Welcome back, Jay.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted today to welcome to the House representatives of the Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario, the OBPO. They will be holding a reception tonight at 4:30. I understand that there may be books for folks who attend. Today from the OBPO we have David Caron; Matt Williams; Kirk Howard, who is the president of the OBPO; Marg Anne Morrison; and Susan Renouf. They're all here in the gallery today. They'll be meeting with many of you. Thank you for welcoming them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of page Jonah Villanueva Merali and the member for Trinity-Spadina, to welcome mother Isfahan Merali and father Sergio Villanueva Vivancos to the Legislature today. Enjoy your visit to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the minority leader of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guest, as well as the Consul General of Ghana, Mr. Kodjo Mawutor. Gentlemen, welcome to Queen's Park today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, life has become much more unaffordable under Premier McGuinty, and hydro bills are going through the roof. Quite frankly, you're pursuing hydro policies that flunk economic sense.

Your recent Samsung deal gives massive subsidies to a foreign multinational corporation and you stick struggling families with the bill. Premier, I announced today that a PC government will end your sweetheart deal with Samsung to bring relief to Ontario families. Why won't you?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague had the opportunity to give some remarks this morning, I understand. There's no secret that he does not support clean energy in the province of Ontario. That's not news.

But given that, to date, Samsung is opening up three manufacturing plants with 700 jobs in Windsor, 900 jobs in Tillsonburg and 200 jobs in Don Mills, and with one more manufacturing plant to come, I would have thought that would have given my colleague some pause before eliminating all those jobs which are so important to those communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Ontario PCs support renewable energy, but we won't support the rip-off deals that you have signed that are driving up prices for ordinary, hard-working families.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Economic Development.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, your deal with Samsung is odious. It was born in suspicious circumstances, and it is a rip-off to seniors and families who are getting stuck with the bill. The Ontario PCs will bring to an end your sweetheart deal with Samsung. We will ensure a transparent and competitive process to get the best price for families that have to pay the bill and the communities where it's welcome. Why won't you?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, my honourable colleague is not only opposed to clean energy and the exciting opportunities that represents for Ontario, but he is also opposed to jobs that are already in place. I think that is reprehensible. What is he going to say to all those families that have found secure employment in the exciting new Ontario-based clean energy industry? I don't know what he intends to say to them.

I want to remind you that the Conservatives, when in power—at that time, the use of dirty coal grew by 127%, with 19 coal units and five coal plants polluting our air. So far we have shut down eight coal plants in the province of Ontario.

My real concern is that my honourable colleague has every intention of reopening those same coal plants at the same time as he shuts down those new jobs. Again, I say to my honourable colleague: That is unacceptable. In fact, it's reprehensible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, your secret deal with Samsung is a shady deal and it is a rip-off for Ontario families that are getting stuck with the bills. Premier, you negotiated behind closed doors with a foreign-based multinational corporation and gave them billions and billions of dollars in subsidies. You passed over Ontario

industry, which could have built these projects and which could have brought it in for a better price.

Let me be clear: An Ontario PC government will end his shady Samsung deal. We'll have competition, a transparent process and will ensure that families can pay the bill. Will you do the right thing, Premier? Will you end your Samsung deal before you drive prices for families through the roof?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague says he's concerned about electricity prices, but when we gave him the opportunity to vote in favour of a clean energy benefit which reduces all our electricity bills by 10% on every bill over the course of the next five years, he refused to support that.

1040

But also, we hear again from a philosophical approach which is opposed to foreign investment in the province of Ontario. My honourable colleague can't make reference to Samsung without saying that they are foreigners, that they are a foreign investment. We're proud of the fact that in the last year alone, Ontario came second only to California in attracting the most foreign direct investment in all of North America.

That's how you compete and succeed in the global economy. It's not the 1960s; it's not the 1970s; it's the 21st century. We know how to compete and win.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm sure the Minister of Health Promotion is very pleased at the wonderful workouts that members are getting today.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: It's a shame that the Liberal members didn't stand up for Ontario companies who could have done the job, and they gave a shady deal to a foreign multinational corporation.

Premier, you just don't get it. Life has become increasingly unaffordable for average families who are struggling to make ends meet. You've engaged in some very expensive energy experiments that simply flunk economic sense. You signed a sweetheart deal with Samsung, with billions of dollars in subsidies. You brought forward a feed-in tariff program that is paying 80 cents for power that could be purchased in the marketplace for five cents. Your FIT program is expensive and it has created a gold rush across the province, and families are stuck paying the bills.

Premier, a PC government would end your massive FIT subsidies and pass on savings to families who pay the bills. Why won't you do the right thing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's true that there has been a gold rush in Ontario, but it has been a gold rush in new and exciting jobs, and I'll talk a little bit about that gold rush.

I mentioned the 700 jobs in Windsor, the 900 in Tillsonburg and the 200 in Don Mills. But what about the 60 in Welland, 150 in Burlington, 225 in Fort Erie, 500 in Guelph, 150 in Cambridge, 100 in Mississauga, another



150 in Windsor, 50 in Woodbridge, 500 in London, 60 in Sault Ste. Marie, 200 in Oakville, 300 in Hamilton, 15 in Peterborough and 100 in Newmarket? I could go on and on, and I look forward to doing so in a supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, your expensive subsidies through your feed-in tariff program, according to London Economics International, will put \$38 billion of pressure on hydro bills. Hydro bills are already going up and up, and you're going to put them through the roof.

Premier, any kid who runs a lemonade stand knows that you can't pay 80 cents for the lemons and try to sell lemonade for a nickel, but that's exactly what you're doing with your feed-in tariff program.

The PC government would take a different approach. We'd have a competitive and transparent approach and let competition get us the best price for the ratepayer and the most modern technology. Premier, we would end your FIT program, bring in some competition and pass on the savings to Ontario families who can't afford your skyrocketing hydro bills.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just want to remind my honourable colleague of a few things said by those communities that are benefiting from all these new jobs. Here's what Eddie Francis, mayor of Windsor, had to say: "Ontario's clean economy is playing a very big part in helping us move successfully into the future and to become a city of choice in which to invest and create jobs."

Here's what the mayor of Tillsonburg said: "Tillsonburg is excited and delighted to welcome Siemens as an important new employer and member of our community. This new ... manufacturing facility will bring great new jobs and help us to establish a foothold in Ontario's growing clean energy economy."

These are municipal leaders who understand the difference between going back and moving forward and between being afraid of foreign direct investment and embracing new and exciting opportunities in the global economy.

I think I know where Ontarians want to go. They want to go forward, they want to embrace opportunities, they want to compete and they want to keep winning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** This is what the Premier simply does not understand: Your skyrocketing hydro bills mean that seniors and families have fewer dollars in their pockets to spend in the economy. Your skyrocketing hydro bills mean losses of jobs in other industries: 300,000 jobs lost in the manufacturing sector alone. For every job that you claim you've created, you've probably cost us three or four jobs elsewhere in the economy.

We will take a different approach. We will put consumers, the people who pay the bills, at the centre of our decisions. We will end your sweetheart Samsung deal, we will eliminate the FIT program, and we will pass on the savings to Ontario hydro ratepayers, who are saying, "Enough is enough. It's time for change in our province." The Ontario PCs will deliver that change.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

It's quiet now, and the moment I sit down, it will change.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, my honourable colleague makes it clear that he stands against foreign investment. I wonder if at some point in time he's going to be moving against Toyota and Honda, because they are from foreign jurisdictions as well.

He stands against clean air. He would reopen our shut-down coal-fired plants, and he stands against the new jobs.

I think he also stands against some of his colleagues in his own caucus, because we were pleased to be joined by, at separate announcements, the MPP for Haldimand-Norfolk; we were pleased to be joined by the MPP for Cambridge; we were pleased to be joined by the MPP for Leeds-Grenville, the MPP for Oxford, the MPP for Burlington and the MPP for Sarnia-Lambton. In each and every one of those instances, in those Conservative ridings, we announced clean energy projects, and we were joined in every instance by his colleagues who support our clean energy plan.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance insisted that this government was proud of its record on sharing information with the people who elected them. Does the Premier share that view?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I believe that we have established a new record as a government in terms of compliance within the recommended 30-day period. I think the NDP stood at 50% compliance; if my memory serves me right, the Conservatives were 57% or something; and I believe we're around 84%. So I think we have established a new record as a government in terms of complying with the freedom-of-information imperative.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In November 2009, a media outlet made a request for the final audit of the Niagara Parks Commission. The people of Ontario paid for that audit report. The Niagara Parks Commission, of course, is an agency of the people of Ontario. Does the Premier think the public has a right to see that report?

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, indeed, as long as it meets the requirements, and the system has worked in all cases that I'm aware of. I look forward to further responding in the final supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** When the request came for the audit, civil servants wanted to transfer the file to the Ministry of Tourism, who would have been more likely to have the records. But a political staffer in the Minister of Finance's office said, "No. Please just say no records exist." Does the Premier stand by this type of action?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The leader of the third party has really taken that out of context. I will table the official request to transfer to the Ministry of Tourism, which was dated November 13, 2009. It was transferred to tourism and the documents were released. Shame on you for trying to put a false spin on your question.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question goes back to the Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question goes back to the Premier. Premier, this just stinks and it stinks very badly. A member of the public asked for an audit report that they helped pay for of an institution that is supposed to be publicly owned and publicly controlled. The McGuinty Liberals want to pretend that it doesn't exist.

Is this Liberal arrogance at work or is this the government that is just so out of touch that they don't know the difference between serving the interests of the people and serving the interests of their own party?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** By a letter dated November 13, 2009, with regard to the specific file, the transfer-of-access request was sent from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Tourism because the Ministry of Finance did not have the records. They were properly with the Ministry of Tourism. I am further informed, in this specific example, that the FOI was in fact abandoned by the requester themselves and not filled. What the leader has said is false and inaccurate. I will table—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I don't need assistance from the members. But I would ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, out of respect to you.

I would then say that the information presented in the House was inaccurate. In fact, a transfer dated November 13, 2009, from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Tourism—I will table this with the House, as well as additional background information, to show that in fact this was transferred from finance to tourism because finance wasn't in possession—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I quote again, directly from the Minister of Finance's staff from his office, an email that says, "No. Please just say no records exist." There's no context around that. It's pretty cut and dried.

This government was elected on a promise to be open and to be transparent, but after eight years it's very clear that they're part of the problem with politics today. It's a government more worried about the next day's headlines than about the families' bottom line. Does this Premier think it's appropriate and acceptable to claim that records don't exist when clearly they do?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The records did not exist in finance and we moved expeditiously to ask that they be made public.

I would like to read something into the record that was stated yesterday by the assistant privacy commissioner, Brian Beamish. These are quotes from yesterday: "Over the past decade, government compliance rates have risen from 42% to more than 80%, according to Beamish ... he has not seen evidence the meddling is changing the nature of the responses.

"I can't say we have seen any particular pattern in Ontario," he said."

We have raised the level of compliance. This particular case—the leader just has her facts wrong. We've got the information, which I'll table with the House, to show what the facts are, as opposed to reckless charges not based on any kind of actual evidence.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This government was elected because it claimed to care about people. But instead of devoting staff time to making life easier and making life more affordable for Ontario families, political staffers are doing their best to suppress information. It's clear that they're willing to go to great lengths to get that job done, even saying records don't exist when they actually do.

My question is a simple one: Does this Premier think that this is acceptable? Or is he willing to admit that after eight long years, his government has grown way too arrogant and way too unaccountable?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Premier of Ontario has the best record of expanding access to information of any Premier in recent memory, including expanding it to cover OPG, Hydro One, universities and hospitals.

What that leader ought to do is acknowledge that her question was wrong, was not based on fact, was in fact shown—and I will table the documents with the table. It was transferred according to the rules under section 2 of the act. It was done in a timely fashion and continues to build on our government's track record of openness, transparency and accessibility. That's what this government and this Premier are all about.

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, Ontario families cannot afford to pay billions for a secret Samsung deal that George Smitherman cooked up on his way out the door. Members of your own cabinet reportedly "gang-tackled" him. They knew that this deal smelled bad. He corrupted the procurement process by handing out a \$7-billion sweetheart deal,



without competitive bidding, to a foreign corporation. Ontario's homegrown talent was shut out.

Why should Ontario families pay a premium for your secret Samsung deal?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We now know that the Leader of the Opposition stands steadfastly against the creation of 16,000 jobs in this province and a \$7-billion foreign investment.

That's consistent for them. They're against foreign companies. They're against foreign investment. They stood against foreign students. The only thing foreign that the Tories support is foreign importation of power from the United States, which cost us almost \$1 billion in their last two empty years in office.

We don't fear the future; we welcome it. We don't fear opening up Ontario to the world because we can compete. We'll compete with any jurisdiction in the clean energy economy. We're building a clean energy powerhouse in this province. We're creating thousands of clean energy jobs that you and your leader want to kill.

I look forward to going from community to community across this province and talking to residents in your ridings and telling them that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

I just remind the member from Renfrew that he did ask the question, and I don't know how he could listen to the answer because he kept interjecting. I just ask you to be more respectful.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I was just trying to help him, Speaker.

Ontario families cannot afford to pay a premium for George Smitherman's legacy of corrupt competitive bidding. Ontario families paid more for eHealth because you followed Smitherman's sole-sourced practices, and they're paying more for energy because of his handiwork in the secret sweetheart deal with Samsung.

We will take a different approach. Ontario families use competitive bidding to build hospitals and schools at prices that are fair to Ontario families. An Ontario PC government will use competitive bidding to build new renewable energy projects at prices that Ontario families can afford.

Why won't you?

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm surprised you didn't stand, Sandra.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Now, I'm happy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We already knew that the PC Party did not support our efforts to modernize our energy system. We already

knew that they don't support our efforts to replace dirty coal with cleaner sources of power, creating cleaner air and building a healthier future for our kids.

Today, we now know that the Leader of the Opposition stands steadfastly against the creation of thousands of jobs across this province and billions of dollars of investment. So I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to join us in Windsor, look those 700 workers in the eye and tell them you want to put them out of work. I challenge you to go to Tillsonburg, bring your member for Oxford with you, go to those workers, go eyeball to eyeball with those workers and tell them you want to kill their jobs. I challenge you to go to Don Mills. Go to Celestica where 200 new jobs are being created. Tell those workers that you want to put them out of work. I challenge you to join me across this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Another outburst from the member from Renfrew will cause a warning.

New question.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. This morning, drivers in cities across Ontario woke up to see gasoline prices had spiked overnight by six cents a litre. It reminded me of something an opposition leader once said to the Premier: "I suggest that one of these days you physically remove yourself from your chauffeur-driven car ... and find out how much Ontario motorists are getting hosed." "When are you going to stand up and take some leadership and defend the interests of Ontario motorists?" That was the MPP for Ottawa South, now the Premier.

My question today is, when are you going to stand up, Premier, and take some leadership and defend the interests of Ontario's motorists?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think all of us share the concern of motorists about the price of gasoline and what's been going on around the world, both in the Middle East and other parts where supply is important. None of us are happy about that. When I drove back to Toronto on Sunday night, I paid, I think, \$1.249 in Windsor. It spiked last night here in Toronto to \$1.399. I didn't fill up last night, but I will have to on my way back to Windsor later this week.

I should point out that this is a global phenomenon and a Canadian phenomenon. What I'll say is this: Between July 2010 and March this year, prices in Toronto are up 17.1% versus 24.1% in Montreal, 21.7% in Edmonton, 21.3% in Calgary and over 30.5% in the United States.

We share the concerns of Ontario motorists and we'll continue to work with all Ontarians as we work through these issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier has scrapped plans to look at any form of price regulation. He's refused to consider any of the proposals that he used to

champion, but that's not all. The Premier isn't just sticking with the status quo that's not working. His unfair HST is adding 10 cents a litre to the price at the pumps. Families in Ontario are actually nostalgic for the days when the Premier used to ignore their problems. Today, Dalton McGuinty is committed to making things even worse.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the honourable member of the use of names.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker.

Today, the Premier is committed to making things even worse. Why is the Premier rejecting the proposals he used to champion, like making life more affordable? Instead, he continues to make life more expensive.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think Ontario consumers recognize the global nature of this phenomenon, that prices are going up everywhere. I think they also recognize that where prices have a regulatory regime, they actually have gone up more and they come down more slowly.

*Laughter.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They laugh, and we've yet to see a positive response in terms of what they would do. I think there's a number of things that—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** They did nothing in power.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, exactly. In fact, as I've indicated, the prices in Ontario have gone up, absolutely, and those of us who fill our tank every week know that. But what we do know is this: They haven't risen as fast as in other jurisdictions.

This is an ongoing phenomenon. There is no quick fix to this; the member knows that. Cheap political grandstanding won't fix it, and I think that Ontario's voters understand that as well.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question this morning is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, farmers and farm organizations in my riding of Peterborough have shared with me, as I know they've shared with you, that the current risk management programs were not meeting their needs. They've been telling our government that Ontario farming is in crisis and at a crossroads.

The budget announcement that the province was creating a permanent risk management program was overwhelmingly welcomed. Farmers in my riding were pleased that this government has taken leadership in working with Ontario's farm leaders to implement these important programs.

Since the announcement, I've begun to receive questions from my constituents as to why the province is moving ahead with a risk management program and why the federal government is not. Can the minister please share with this House how this program is different from the programs currently offered and supported by the government of Canada?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you very much for the question. Let's begin with what the farmers are saying:

The current suite of business risk management programs does not meet the needs of Ontario farmers. They need predictability, they need bankability and they need stability for a prosperous future.

An RMP will complement rather than replace the existing suite of BRM programs by providing additional protection for farmers against rising input costs and market price volatility. With the leadership of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, commodity organizations developed their own programs—programs by farmers, for farmers. This is the most significant made-in-Ontario agriculture program in 25 years.

It's important to hear what the farmers are saying. Bette Jean Crews, president of the OFA, said, "Ontario announced full support for permanent risk management programs.... But that will only cover 40% of the costs for adequate programs"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Minister, I appreciate your informing this House and my constituents that our government is making yet another investment in Ontario's hard-working families.

Ontario farmers have expressed that the current programs are not meeting their needs, and the federal government acknowledged this position. Our farmers want and need risk management programs shared between producers and both levels of government. Yet the federal government still refuses to participate in the program.

The agriculture critic, the MPP from Oxford, pointed out in the Meaford Independent that the federal government has concerns over implementing the program and that an Ontario problem needs an Ontario solution. It's a shame that the opposition has given up on the federal government supporting this program, given up on supporting Ontario's farmers and given up on RMP, which they claim is a priority.

Minister, are you going to bring up risk management with the federal government at the next federal-provincial-territorial meeting this summer?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased—and this is a critical piece that I want to get Bette Jean's words out on today: "Ontario announced full support for permanent risk management programs.... But that will only cover 40% of the cost for adequate programs, and without support at the federal level, the remaining burden is left for farmers. That is not acceptable." That is what we will be bringing to the table. That is what they have written to Prime Minister Harper.

But we need support from all parties. Our government has a plan that will give our farmers predictability, bankability and stability, but, quite frankly, the opposition has no plan. They want to show their support for risk management; they've got their chance today. They can vote on the budget that will support it.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford will please come to order.

Minister, please continue.



**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** The farmers want to know: Are you with them or are you against them? They want to know. They want a clear message from the opposition. They want to know: Do you stand with the farmers or do you stand with your federal cousins? The programs work with everyone at the table.

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Premier. The backroom sweetheart deal you've cut with your foreign partner is an experiment that's gone badly off the rails. Six Nations walked away from a deal with Samsung to locate windmills and solar panels on their reserves. Chief Bill Montour said, "What caused the failure is that the company was very closed about the information we needed.... Samsung was basically saying, 'Sign the deal and trust us.'"

1110

What makes you think Ontario families should have more trust in a deal with a foreign conglomerate than with their own partners?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** There's no question that, for some reason, that party lives in fear of foreign investment. For some reason that party lives in fear of reaching out to the rest of the world and building a strong clean energy economy here in Ontario. I'm going to share with you what—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe—Grey, member from Durham, please come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's see what others around the world are saying about Ontario. The executive director of the United Nations Environment Program was in Toronto yesterday. He applauded our government's efforts to build a world-leading clean energy economy in Ontario. This is what he said about the position of the Leader of the Opposition: He called it simplistic and said that it threatens to undermine a crucial policy in boosting Ontario's economy.

We will not let the simplistic position of the members opposite take down our clean energy economy and lose those thousands of jobs. Those jobs mean a lot to Ontario families, and we're going to fight for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** We don't fear foreign investment; we fear the mess that that minister has made of it. Your expensive secret sweetheart deal with Samsung is not producing jobs or power. Samsung has not produced a single watt of power. First Nations walked away from dealing with Samsung.

It is a \$7-billion deal that you're adding to the hydro bills of Ontario families, who are feeling squeezed enough already. They cannot afford to pay more, and job announcements do not mean that any jobs exist. They don't.

On October 7, our leader and an Ontario PC government will end the deal. We will restore competition. We will procure renewable energy at prices Ontario families can afford to pay.

How did you get to be so out of touch that you continue to pursue energy at prices Ontario families cannot afford?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The agreement that that member opposite is so keen to end will also bring a death to 700 jobs in Windsor, 900 jobs in Tillsonburg and 200 jobs in Don Mills—16,000 jobs over the life of agreement and \$7 billion in investment in our economy. Our clean energy economy here today has become the global leading clean energy economy in the world.

It's not always easy. It does take effort. It takes political courage. It takes fortitude. That's something that the party opposite obviously does not possess. But with the vision of this Premier, with the fortitude and courage of this party here in office today, we will build those clean energy projects. We will create those clean energy jobs. We will make Ontario the clean energy powerhouse of the world. We will fight for those jobs, and we will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. A recent report by the well-regarded TD Economics department shows that Ontario is running a poor sixth amongst provinces when it comes to regaining jobs lost in the recent recession.

My question is this: When will the Premier admit that his policy mix of the unfair HST, escalating hydro rates and more corporate tax giveaways is bad economics and just isn't working?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to answer this question. Last week, Stats Canada came out with an unbelievable number of 114% of jobs recovered since the recession in Ontario. What's important is that we look relatively at other jurisdictions and how they've been doing in responding post-recession. In the UK, it's around 50%. In the US, it's now around 20%. But in Ontario, our economy is starting to run again, and you, sir, should be proud of this. Instead, you are busy trying to tear us down at every step.

The people in Niagara who are so well represented in the House, especially today with the lord mayor from Niagara-on-the-Lake—we're busy talking to these folks about a renewable energy industry, one that simply didn't exist a mere three years ago. These are the kinds of gains that Ontario is having today that they didn't—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister raves about a StatsCan report that shows that most of those jobs are part-time jobs. The fact is that Ontario lags behind a majority of provinces—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** And the fact is, Ontario lags behind the majority of provinces when it comes to recovering jobs lost during the recession. The minister ought to know. In her own hometown of Windsor, the unemployment rate is more than 10.3%, and that leaves out all the people who have stopped looking for jobs. In contrast, provinces such as Manitoba and Quebec have used a combination of reasonable hydro rates, targeted financial incentives and public sector procurement to secure good jobs.

When will the McGuinty government catch on and admit that the HST isn't doing it and your corporate tax giveaways aren't doing it and escalating hydro—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Here are the facts: 95% of the jobs recovered in Ontario were full-time. That's Stats Canada telling us this; those are not our numbers.

But what's really important is that on any measure, when they start to score Ontario against the world, Ontario keeps punching above its weight. Our foreign direct investment is second only to California, and they are three times our size by population, 10 times by size of economy, and yet we created more jobs by foreign direct investment than California did, even with fewer numbers of investments. That speaks to the kinds of tools we've made available for investment: a great corporate tax rate, yes; great post-secondary education achievement in our province; all of these things. And to all of those who are seeing those new jobs, we want you to beware of those opposition parties that want to tear us down, because we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## JOB CREATION

**Mr. David Orazietti:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and let's take a minute and reinforce this point. I continue to hear the members opposite state that Ontario has become a have-not province, and their negativity is unfortunate.

In fact, I understand that Ontario has regained more than 100% of the jobs since the recession. I'm proud to represent the riding of Sault Ste. Marie in this great province, and I can attest to the positive economic influence that our government has had in our community and throughout Ontario. We have companies like California-based Rentech, which has recently chosen to build a \$500-million biomass plant in White River, Ontario, creating 400 new jobs. The plant will convert timber into renewable, clean jet fuel. This plant is the first plant of its kind in the world—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Timmins will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Mr. David Orazietti:** Thanks, Speaker. You know, the NDP just can't handle good news; it's not a surprise.

The plant will convert timber into clean, renewable jet fuel. This is the first plant—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** As I reminded the member from Renfrew earlier—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Do you have a guilty conscience? I wasn't even talking about you.

I just want to remind the member from Timmins—James Bay that he's getting very close to a line.

Just 10 seconds to wrap up the question, please.

**Mr. David Orazietti:** That's 400 new jobs in White River, Ontario.

Can the minister tell us how Ontario can be considered a have-not province when we are seeing so much—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I think it's clear that Ontario punches above its weight, and we're proud of that fact. We are seeing, time and time again, people from around the world who are turning to Ontario to make those investments. We see great news out of Sudbury last week when Total from the US lands in Sudbury with 400 new jobs. The Sault Ste. Marie announcement last week was tremendous news.

And we appreciate that it's tough for the opposition, whose job it is to be negative, when they see things turning around for Ontario after the rough ride that we had in the recession. It's about time that we get to celebrate how well our recovery has gone in this province, and we're delighted to see that communities, working together with our government, are making it happen where it counts, and that is for jobs.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Orazietti:** Minister, I appreciate the information. To the minister's last point, it's interesting that lately there seem to be more and more international companies deciding on Ontario as the place where they want to do business and invest. In fact, the latest Financial Times foreign direct investment report stated that for the second consecutive year, Ontario has been named one of the top two destinations for foreign direct investment in North America. In 2010, the report stated that funding for projects into Ontario consisted of an estimated US\$6.1 billion in capital investment, creating an estimated 11,200 jobs in the province. That's phenomenal and definitely something that every member of this Legislature should be proud of.

Minister, can you explain why Ontario is continuing to become more attractive to foreign investors?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I do believe that these international companies look at Ontario and look at the



stability that our government can have for these companies to make decisions on investments of this size. In the last budget tabled in this House, 10,000 jobs related to some 30 announcements that have happened since that budget was tabled, every one of them meaning jobs for Ontarians. That's important.

We are going to have a vote in the House this afternoon. It's going to be on this very same budget. We want to see where the opposition members are on a budget that delivers jobs for families right here in our province. Will the NDP support jobs in Ontario? Will the Conservatives support jobs in Ontario? One thing is clear: The Liberal Party of Ontario supports jobs in Ontario, and we may be the only party that will be doing this. We'll get to see that this afternoon in the House.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, a few weeks ago I had a message from Harold Marshall waiting for me at my Collingwood office. He's a farmer in Singhampton who called to let me know that Hydro One had just told him that they were turning on his time-of-use smart meter. Mr. Marshall had a simple request: "Would you ask McGuinty how I'm going to get the cows to read time?" So, Premier, I ask you on behalf of Mr. Marshall, how is he going to get his cows to read time?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I hear the question from the member opposite, but I think what that member would want his constituent to know is that we now have in place in this province a clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off rates right across the province. Indeed, that clean energy benefit has helped keep rates flat from year to year.

I think he should also let his constituent know—because maybe he hasn't—that indeed we've increased 10 extra hours a week of discount time for Ontario families. We've listened very carefully to what Ontario families have told us: They want the hours between 7 and 9 to be discount time, and we've delivered that as well.

But what is critical is that we continue to modernize our energy system. This is about modernization of an energy system that the members opposite, their party, had allowed to become completely outdated—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Marshall's phone call shows just how out of touch this government is with farmers and families who rely on affordable electricity. Premier McGuinty came to office on a promise to freeze hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. Instead, he has raised rates eight times in seven years, from 4.3 cents to over 10 cents, because this government doesn't respect the consumers' ability to pay. It's the McGuinty government that has caused rates to rise by 150%. They are ripping off consumers by bolting smart meter tax machines to their houses. They're extending the debt retirement charge and

paying rates as high as 80 cents per kilowatt hour for power that they are turning around and selling to the United States for three cents.

It's time for change in Ontario. When will this hydro nightmare end?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** There's a reason the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is very supportive of our energy policy, very supportive of moving to smart technology. Another reason why they're very supportive—and certainly I think you'd want to make those farmers aware of the fact that you want to kill their opportunities in our clean energy economy, in those microFIT programs, and that indeed the very member opposite speculated about ripping up contracts. Those farmers deserve those contracts. That's about \$10,000 extra a year that goes into the pockets of Ontario farmers. You want to take those opportunities away from them.

Indeed, later on today we're going to be voting for risk management for farmers. Are you for that or are you against it?

We stand behind Ontario farmers on this side of the House. They want to take away opportunities for Ontario farmers on the other side.

### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday in Dryden, residents gathered to protest skyrocketing hydro bills. Here's how one of the organizers, Kelly Getson, described the rally: "People are not going to take it anymore ... they have to make a choice between putting food on the table or paying the hydro bill."

It's clear that Ontarians simply cannot afford rising hydro rates, and this rally really showed that they will not keep quiet about it anymore. When will the Premier listen to people like Kelly Getson and other northerners, and provide real, permanent hydro bill relief for Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've listened very closely to Ontario families. What was announced a couple of weeks ago was very good news for Ontario families, that indeed bills are remaining absolutely flat across this province from one year to the next. I know why that's bad news to the leader of the opposition: because she can no longer continue to make it up as she goes along in this Legislature when she brings up these questions. You can torque it, you can twist it, you can make things up all you want; you're entitled to your own opinion, but you're not entitled to your own facts.

The fact of the matter is, rates are flat year to year, from May of last year to May of this year. Our clean energy benefit is having the desired effect; it stabilized energy rates. All the while, we'll continue to invest in building a clean, modern and reliable energy system that those very same families can count on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier may want to ignore people in communities like Dryden, but it's clear

that Ontarians will keep telling this government that they reject his hydro policies. Not only is the Premier creating an expensive hydro system that grants exorbitant salaries to CEOs in agencies, like the OPG, and drives industries and manufacturing plants to neighbouring provinces, like Manitoba, in search of lower energy prices, he's gouging Ontario families who now struggle every day just to make ends meet.

Why won't the Premier provide real relief to Ontarians and remove the HST from hydro and from home heating bills?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We understand the challenges Ontario families face dealing with their day-to-day budgets, and that's why we brought in a clean energy benefit that does more than what you want to do; it takes 10% off the bills of Ontario families. What it's done—and the Ontario Energy Board has been very clear—is it has created a situation where bills are flat. That's the Ontario Energy Board's analysis, not ours.

I think now that the leader of the third party has been leader for over 793 days, it's time for her to come forward with what she wants to do with energy policy in this province. We have a clean energy benefit that's stabilizing bills. Are you for it or against it? We're making improvements to improve our transmission system. Mr. Speaker, she's opposed that every step of the way. We're replacing dirty coal with cleaner sources of power. Where do you stand—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In Willowdale, there's a lot of discussion about the province's continued commitment to upload the cost of social services dumped on the municipalities by the Conservatives.

The leader of the official opposition has said that if elected he will cut the size of government and reduce taxes. The problem is, we've heard that before, only to see municipal property taxes skyrocket across Ontario as the Harris-Eves government downloaded services to municipal taxpayers.

Minister, what is our government doing to help municipalities across Ontario maintain their services? What are we doing about uploading services?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to thank the member for the question. We've entered into a landmark agreement with municipalities across Ontario. We are now uploading the cost of a variety of social services, which, when done, will provide local taxpayers and municipalities with a \$1.5-billion net benefit per year.

This year alone, our municipal partners—and we call them partners—will see a net benefit of \$945 million. That agreement was reached in consultation with our municipalities across Ontario. You see, we treat our municipalities as equal partners. We treat them with respect. We treat them with the understanding they

deserve, and their unique problems can only be addressed by a provincial government that cares.

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Folks in Willowdale and, indeed, Ontarians are going to be very happy about this government's commitment to continue uploading the costs of these services.

Minister, you referred to the downloading of these costs by the Conservative government of Harris and Eves, and I remember those days well. That's when the Tories claimed the exercise would be "revenue-neutral." Minister, what happened during those Harris-Eves years and what has the government done to fix the problem created by that downloading?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** That's a very, very important question, especially with the municipalities of Niagara here. The present leader of the PC Party uttered the identical words to the former Premier of the province of Ontario, Mike Harris, and this is what happened.

First of all, that government cut the number of municipalities. Then they cut the funding to municipalities. Then they downloaded social services to the municipalities. Then they downloaded secondary highways to the municipalities. But they forgot to do one thing: They forgot to give the municipalities of the Niagara region money to do this. They forgot to give them the respect they deserve. That's why we entered into a partnership that's based on mutual respect and consultation with each other, to ensure that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### SMART METERS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Culligan water is a major employer in the city of Brockville, and what has happened to them shows just how much the McGuinty government's failed energy experiments have hurt Ontario families and businesses. Culligan revamped its entire production schedule to overnight hours to try to soften the blow when you installed one of your so-called smart meters at the company. After they installed it they were told, "Oops, sorry, we made a mistake. You don't qualify for time-of-use. Pay up."

Minister, why do you continue to defend your billion-dollar smart meter boondoggle when it has become such a mess that you don't even know who's in and who's out?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The PC Party continues to oppose our efforts to modernize our energy system. I can understand that because, during all their years in office, they failed to make the decisions and investments needed to do that.

It's not easy to modernize an entire energy system. It's not easy to put Ontario out ahead of the world, and that's exactly where we are when it comes to modernizing our energy system. But if we want to be ready for the future



of energy needs of Ontario, for things like the advent of electric cars, we need to get on with modernizing our energy system. That's exactly what we're doing.

They're tough decisions. It's difficult to do, but we're not going to let Ontario families down. We're going to give them an energy system that they can count on today and well into the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Come on, Minister. We all know your smart meters are just tax machines for the McGuinty government.

This embarrassing situation in my riding just shows how out of touch this government has become. You've penalized families by making them do their laundry at midnight. Now you've pulled the plug on Culligan water's efforts to avoid being zapped by your higher energy prices by suddenly changing the rules of the game.

Minister, when will you stop conducting energy experiments and start implementing policies that give businesses the break they need to keep the lights on?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Modernizing our energy system is also an important effort that's going to help us move away from dirty coal and get into cleaner sources of power. We're going to need to do that if we're going to ensure that we have cleaner air and a healthier future for our kids.

Why do the members opposite continue to stand in the way of our efforts to build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids? Why do they continue to stand in the way of our efforts to modernize our energy system to ensure that Ontario's power system can meet the needs of the future? Why do they continue to stand in the way of our efforts to build a clean energy economy that's leading the world, creating thousands of jobs? Thirteen thousand jobs were created last year in our clean energy economy. Fifty thousand jobs will be created by the year 2012.

We're moving forward and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Six months ago, in reaction to the hospital lobbyists and consultants scandal, the government promised to make hospital information available through freedom-of-access-to-information legislation. But now, schedule 15 in the budget bill allows for any document linked to quality improvement to never be released. This opens up a loophole that a truck could fit through, allowing hospitals to hide all information by simply saying the information is linked to quality improvement. Why is the Premier backtracking on hospital freedom-of-information requests?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are amendments, as the member knows, contained in the budget that do, in fact, allow freedom of information for hospitals. We're proud

to be doing that. There are some necessary limitations on that that protect a variety of interests and also serve, I believe, to ensure that we have an adequate, open and transparent hospital system and that, at the same time, we don't expose it to unnecessary legal actions and lawsuits. We think it's the appropriate balance.

I look forward to voting in favour of that in a few minutes, just as I look forward to voting in favour of considerable new resources for children's mental health and addictions. I hope the member opposite will vote in favour of those things as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** He just said that they made the changes to respond to some interests. The bill was brought forward because of lobbyists. The bill was brought forward because of what was going on. We don't want backroom deals anymore. People have waited a long time for transparency in our hospitals. There are so many Ontarians out there who need closure. That closure will come through access to information.

Six months ago the government seemed to support more transparency, but now, in one clean sweep, in schedule 15 of the budget, the minister's doing away with hospital transparency.

What would keep a hospital practising continuous quality improvement from hiding everything from freedom-of-information requests?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The amendments are appropriate and proper in the context of an open and accountable health care system for all Ontarians.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** And confidential.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm proud that this government is the government that has moved to provide that freedom of information, striking the balance, as my colleague indicates, of confidentiality for individual patients and medical practitioners along with the public's absolute right to know and understand.

It is part of a larger budget that will fund children's mental health and addictions services; create a risk management program; 15 new breast screening enhancements. I look forward to the NDP caucus voting for all of those important things in the next few minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended. I just want to—

**Interjection:** Time to vote.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to take this opportunity: A number of guests will be here at the Legislature this evening, and I would like to welcome them back. These are former Speakers, who will be joining me this evening: Hugh Edgihoffer, David Warner, Al McLean, Ed Doyle, Chris Stockwell, Gary Carr and Alvin Curling. I'm very much looking forward to welcoming these esteemed individuals back to the House tonight.

*Applause.*

## DEFERRED VOTES

### BETTER TOMORROW FOR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR DES LENDEMAINS MEILLEURS POUR L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 173, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John

Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard

Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hudak, Tim  
Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Munro, Julia

Murdoch, Bill  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tabuns, Peter  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 33.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

## SECURITIES INDUSTRY

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the motion by Ms. Broten to locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 33.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1148 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I'm pleased to recognize, in the members' gallery, a number of firefighters, including Carmen Santoro and some other firefighters from the Mississauga area, and also recognize in the gallery above us Mr. Fred LeBlanc, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I welcome them to the assembly.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to recognize the 63rd anniversary of the state of Israel's independence. Israel, much like our country Canada, is a diverse and culturally rich environment. However, it has had to assert itself and protect its citizens after onslaughts from aggressors that seek to destroy the state of Israel and the very fabric on which it was founded.

Israel's 63rd anniversary marks a time when we can look towards this tiny sliver of a country as a beacon of democracy and religious diversity in a region that is often ripe with conflict and turbulence. Many in Thornhill have a strong bond with Israel, and its security and safety are paramount to them. Others view Israel as their religious home, as three major religions that are represented in Thornhill call Jerusalem their Holy City.

Since the independence of the state of Israel, countless people have travelled to Israel to see the Holy Land for themselves. Before our time, thousands of people fought for centuries for control over this piece of land, which is barely 8,000 square miles, yet throughout the centuries this land has seen Christians, Muslims and Jews all call



Israel home. Today, these religions live in relative harmony with each other and have added to the rich diversity that we can see when walking the streets of Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

I am honoured to stand today in recognition of the 63rd anniversary of the independence of the state of Israel. Am Yisroel Chai.

### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On Tuesday, April 5, 2011, a headline appeared in the Peterborough Examiner newspaper that read, "On Top of the World After Mt. Kilimanjaro Climb." The article associated with this headline described a local fundraising initiative that raised money for the Peterborough Regional Health Care Centre's new cancer bunker.

Scott Stewart, Matt Rutherford and Drew Merrett raised \$65,000 by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, standing 5,882 metres tall. They battled many obstacles, such as oxygen deprivation and extreme physical and mental exhaustion, as they climbed to the summit of this famous peak.

"Hitting the peak was probably the most emotional thing I've ever experienced ... crying like a baby," 46-year-old Scott Stewart said.

His fellow climbers experienced the same sensation of euphoria when they grasped the reality of their accomplishment.

The funds raised will be matched by the PRHC Foundation, making the final total \$100,000.

These three courageous individuals were not experienced mountain climbers but felt motivated to raise funds to help those battling cancer in our area. Everyone in Peterborough riding is proud and amazed at this fundraising project and the commitment of these three fine individuals.

### BRENT ROBILLARD

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Every day in classrooms around Ontario, dedicated teachers are making life-changing impressions on our children. I'm sure everyone in this House can, in some way, trace their life's path to that one teacher who suddenly opened up the world and made us feel like anything was possible.

Today, I rise to celebrate one of those special teachers from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. I'm honoured that Brent Robillard, a teacher at Thousand Islands Secondary School in Brockville, is one of five Teacher of the Year Award recipients announced by the Ministry of Education.

It's recognition that's long overdue for Brent, whose time with students leaves them with lessons that go far beyond the walls of a classroom. The passion he instills in those teenagers has helped them to make an impact beyond Canada's borders.

Brent is co-founder of the Thousand Islands international studies program, which culminates in a 15-day

visit to Nicaragua, where months of study about complex issues like poverty and human rights suddenly become tangible. Students return from this experience with more than an education; it makes them better citizens.

A published author, Brent has also founded the writer's craft program at Thousand Islands. The courses challenge students to use the power of words and language to unlock the potential of their imagination so that they can write and publish their own novels.

On behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville, especially those parents lucky enough to have a child in one of his classes, I'd like to congratulate Brent Robillard on this well-deserved award.

### PAUL PRIMEAU

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I rise today to salute my constituent Sergeant Major Paul Primeau, who served his country in the Canadian military. Nickel Belt has a proud tradition of producing young men and women who have volunteered to serve their country. We must recognize the sacrifices our veterans have made.

I'm proud that the people of Nickel Belt stepped up to the plate for Corporal Bill Kerr and built his family a new, accessible house after a roadside bomb in Afghanistan left him disabled.

Now, the 400 proud residents of Gogama will join in a community celebration for Sergeant Major Paul Primeau, who has volunteered for two deployments to Afghanistan. They will recognize the selfless acts he has made on behalf of his community and his country.

The people of Gogama are proud to know Paul. They know him as a volunteer with the fire department. They know him as a good neighbour, a good father to Aaron, a good husband to Sue and a friend to all. I hope everyone in this Legislature congratulates Sergeant Major Paul Primeau on selflessly putting himself in harm's way and returning home safely to his family.

I also invite everybody to visit Gogama and witness its beauty, unspoiled lakes and wonderful people. The Ojibwa call it "jumping fish" for good reason. If you're interested in pickerel fishing, Lake Minisinakwa in Gogama is the place to go.

### RYAN ELLIS

### MARK VISENTIN

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** As Ontarians have their eyes on the NHL playoff season, even more exciting news has once again come out of my riding of Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale. For the second time, the talented Ryan Ellis of Freelton has won the Ontario Hockey League's Max Kaminsky Trophy for the top defenceman in the league, and he has been named OHL player of the year. And Mark Visentin of Waterdown, my hometown, has been named the Ontario Hockey League's goaltender of the year.

Ryan netted over 100 points this season, the first time an OHL defenceman has done that in nearly a decade.

Mark posted the second-best goals against average and save percentage in the league en route to a 30-9-2-4 record. After the 2009-10 season, Visentin was ranked fourth amongst North American goalies by the NHL Central Scouting Bureau. Mark and Ryan were also teammates in this year's World Junior Hockey Championship.

The Windsor Spitfires and the Niagara Ice Dogs are blessed to have these exceptional young men on their teams. They have both been drafted to the NHL, and we are looking forward to the great hockey futures that Mark and Ryan undoubtedly have. Well done, guys.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The residents in my riding have recently learned that their properties may be designated as provincially significant wetlands. As I indicated in my statement on April 13, this would severely limit their ability to use and enjoy their private property. To date, no residents were even aware that the ministry was conducting studies on their private property. Over 200 residents in the Darlington area and a further 150 in the Clarke area will be affected by this designation.

Taxpayers deserve respect, and they deserve to be listened to. Taxpayers deserve to be kept informed when the provincial government is studying their land and looking into placing new restrictions on the use of their land. The requests from citizens are reasonable, and the discussion should be reasonable.

I want to thank Karen Tremblay, Ted and Beth Meszaros, Libby Recansky, Heather Whalen, William Wallace, Walter Pringle, Rolland, Bert and Glenn Wiegell, Brian Catherwood, Martin Gerkes, Kerry Meydam, Vicky MacBeth, Kurt Gelder and other very concerned citizens.

I call on the Minister of Natural Resources to ask the property owners be advised before imposing new wetland regulations from Queen's Park.

1510

I ask Clarington Mayor Adrian Foster and his council and staff to work co-operatively and to listen to our common constituents. I am confident that the Minister of Natural Resources will listen respectfully to their concern.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am pleased to rise today to speak about the recent youth fair which I had the pleasure of organizing in partnership with community agencies based in the Jane Street community hub, to showcase the various youth programs available in York South-Weston, including youth mentorship, after-school and youth outreach worker programs, as well as the Ontario summer jobs program.

This was an excellent opportunity to share important information with youth in York South-Weston as they firm up their plans for the summer and look for jobs over the coming months.

Providing opportunities to build job skills and experience is vital to getting our young people off to the best start possible as they consider their future career paths. The success of our government's summer jobs strategy has been incredible. As part of the 2011 provincial budget, our government announced an additional \$22.5 million in 2011-12 to help over 100,000 students access jobs and services this summer, including targeted resources for youth in high-needs neighbourhoods.

The fair received a tremendous response from the community and participating agencies: Yorktown Family Services, COSTI, Midaynta, the Learning Enrichment Foundation, Macaulay Child Development Centre, 12 division of the Toronto police. I look forward to working with them again on similar community initiatives.

#### HINDU HERITAGE CENTRE

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Last week, I joined Premier Dalton McGuinty and my colleagues Eric Hoskins, Charles Sousa and Kuldip Kular to open the newly completed Hindu Heritage Centre in the village of Streetsville.

We were warmly welcomed with a flower garland by spiritual leader Acharya Surender Sharma, or Shastri Ji, as he's known, and by hundreds of members of the Mississauga Hindu community.

We participated in aarti and puja, traditional Hindu practices. We met with the community leaders, toured the beautiful facility and shared traditional Indian vegetarian foods with Hindu community members.

After four years of construction, this visually stunning new Streetsville landmark now serves some of the 250,000 Hindus throughout the greater Toronto area, and particularly in our western Mississauga neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Streetsville and Meadowvale.

The celebration of Hindu culture and tradition helps sustain the harmony of Mississauga's rich multicultural diversity. Through community language, arts and performance programs, and classes offered at the Hindu Heritage Centre, Hindu and Indian culture and heritage are preserved, shared and integrated with the broader western Mississauga community.

The new Hindu Heritage Centre on Mississauga Road is already a Streetsville landmark. It will serve and benefit many generations of western Mississauga residents.

Thank you. Dhanyavaad.

#### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** On behalf of Premier McGuinty and my colleagues, I rise for the purpose of recognizing an historic event that took place 63 years ago: the establishment of the state of Israel. It is the fulfillment of prophecies, prayers and dreams. On this festive occasion, all of us join in the hopes and prayers of Jewish people here and in Israel that the day may not be far off when the people of Israel and the nations of the world lay down their arms, turn their swords into plowshares and realize the beautiful word of peace, "shalom."



Israel may be a small dot on the map of the world, but it is a significant model of democracy. In spite of economic hardships, wars and threats of war, Israel has not lost its sense of purpose: to shine as a beacon of freedom, democracy and fulfillment of the promise of the ancient Hebrew prophets.

Today at 12 noon, we hoisted the Star of David outside of this chamber, but our historic relationship goes back to 1986, when, as minister responsible for multiculturalism, I had the pleasure of proclaiming Israel Independence Day on behalf of our government for the first time.

I wish to say this to the Jewish community: Shalom and congratulations on behalf of all of us.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated May 10, 2011, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### 917866 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2011

Mrs. Elliott moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr48, An Act to revive 917866 Ontario Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 193, An Act to amend the French Language Services Act with respect to the French Language Services Commissioner's reporting requirements / Projet de loi 193, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services en français en ce qui concerne les rapports exigés du commissaire aux services en français.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Présentement, selon la Loi sur les services en français, le commissaire aux services en français soumet son rapport annuel et ses rapports spéciaux à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Le projet de loi modifie la Loi sur les services en français et exige que ces rapports—les rapports du commissaire aux services en français—soient soumis au Président de l'Assemblée législative.

Currently, the French Language Services Act requires the French Language Services Commissioner to submit annual and special reports to the minister responsible for francophone affairs. The bill amends the act to require that these reports be submitted to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### NURSING WEEK

### SEMAINE DES SOINS INFIRMIERS

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is Nursing Week in Ontario, and May 12 is International Nurses Day. It's a wonderful opportunity to recognize nurses for their commitment, knowledge and compassion, and to thank them for their relentless determination to improve our health care system and, more importantly, the health of Ontarians.

Nursing Week really is something to celebrate, and there's no better place to celebrate it than in Ontario. If you understand health care and are committed to building the best possible health care system, you know that you simply cannot do that without nurses. Nurses are the backbone of our health care system. The McGuinty government has understood that basic fact from the outset of our mandate.

It was not always so in Ontario. Since our election in 2003, this government has firmly committed to funding more nursing positions and creating more career opportunities and better working conditions for our nurses, so we began reversing the tide of years of cutbacks and layoffs. Since then we've created more than 11,000 nursing positions, with more to come, and we're getting close to 70% full-time employment for nurses.

We're also making this province the best place anywhere to practise nursing. We're doing a better job of leveraging the extraordinary knowledge and skills that nurses possess.

One of the best examples of that is nurse-practitioner-led clinics. We're building on the success of the Sudbury pilot. In fact, we're creating 25 more of them where, under the leadership of a nurse practitioner, RNs, RPNs

and other health care professionals work collaboratively to provide top-notch patient-driven care. All 25 of the NP-led clinics have been announced and are in various stages of becoming operational, with eight already up and running. In fact, just last week I attended the opening of the newest nurse practitioner-led clinic in Essex with the member Bruce Crozier.

1520

We have proposed that nurse practitioners be allowed to admit and discharge patients from hospitals. That's making great use of the skills and expertise of Ontario's highly educated nurses. Our government has also recently amended the Public Hospitals Act so that chief nursing executives must sit on hospital boards. That means that nurses' input is heard as decisions are being made. I want to acknowledge the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the RNAO, for advising us on this initiative.

This Thursday, I'll announce funding that will ensure that each public health unit across the province has a chief nursing officer to provide leadership and accountability.

As for making Ontario the best place to practise nursing, yesterday I was very pleased to announce that our government's nursing graduate guarantee has connected more than 10,000 nursing graduates with full-time nursing jobs. The NGG—nursing graduate guarantee program—pays for six months of employment, complete with salaries and benefits. It's a way of connecting employers with early-career nurses so that those nurses experience full-time employment. In 2009-10, more than 2,600 nursing graduates participated in the program.

At the other end of the experience spectrum, we've created the late-career nurse initiative, based on research completed by our brand new provincial chief nursing officer, Debra Bournes, in her role as director of nursing, new knowledge and innovation at the University Health Network. Since 2004, the late-career nurse initiative has been providing late-career nurses with the opportunity to spend a portion of their work time in less physically demanding nursing roles and, at the same time, put their experience to work improving patient care. The purpose is to retain the skills and knowledge of this important group of nurses and create an improved work environment for them. Last year, the program supported more than 2,500 late-career nurses in 90 hospitals and 142 long-term-care homes.

Yesterday, I was very pleased to announce that our government is providing \$8 million in annual base funding for the late-career initiative program, which will support late-career nurse participants, this year and every year.

When I looked at the RNAO best practice guidelines, which have been adopted not only elsewhere in Canada but across the world, I realized that nurses do instinctively what I aspire to do across the health care system: build a system that is of the highest quality, that is evidence-based, that is cost-effective and that puts the patient at the centre. As we celebrate Nursing Week, my message to nurses is this: Ontario needs you, and this

government is committed to supporting you at every age of your career, no matter the setting in which you work.

I know from my own personal experience with the health care system, as a daughter, as a mother and as a grandmother, that nurses are vital to Ontario's health care system. I also know that other Ontario families can count on nurses' expertise, caring and diligence. For all that they do on behalf of Ontarians, I cannot thank nurses enough.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?**

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise in the House today to join in the celebration of Nursing Week. This week offers the opportunity to showcase nurses' knowledge, skills and compassion as well as the demands of their daily work. On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I would like to offer my congratulations to all of Ontario's nurses for the hard work that they do and to express appreciation for the dedication, caring, compassion and professionalism that they show to their patients each and every day. Nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to celebrate the nursing profession, here with my colleagues today and for the remainder of the week through community events.

This year's theme is "Nursing—The Health of Our Nation." Nurses are often the first line of patient contact in our health care system. Today's nurses must embrace many roles in their practices, from first contact to patient assessment, performing tests, administering treatment, monitoring patients, patient advocacy and sometimes just to be a caring face, a hand to hold, or a shoulder to cry on—nurses are always there.

Aside from the incredibly skilled work our nurses do every day, they are also the human side of our health care system and make our hospitals, clinics, community health and long-term-care centres more pleasant places for patients, visitors, families and friends.

The McGuinty government has paid lip service to these hard-working men and women, but unfortunately it stops there. This government promised in 2003 to ensure that 8,000 nurses were hired during their first mandate. The McGuinty government did not achieve this goal.

In the 2007 election campaign, they committed to adding 9,000 nurses to our workforce by 2011. In October 2008, just one year after the promise was made, the McGuinty government announced that the province was facing a huge deficit and would be delaying the 9,000-nurse hire.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario has said, "in the name of quality patient care—that balancing budgets on the backs of nurses and health care is wrong." Instead of increasing the excellent front-line patient care offered by nurses, the McGuinty government has instead invested in more red tape and bureaucracy.

This week, many of us will be visiting and witnessing first-hand the role of nurses in our riding and the excellent care that they provide. On Thursday, I will be attending a home-care visit for Saint Elizabeth Health Care in Toronto with RNAO representative Nancy Lefebvre, and on Friday I will have the pleasure of



participating in the annual Take Your MPP to Work Day, where I will be joining my fellow Durham region MPPs at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences. There, we will have the opportunity to have breakfast with some of our local nurses, and later we will have the chance to see them in action, doing what they do best—putting patients first.

Thank you again to all of Ontario's nurses for the excellent work they do on our behalf each and every day.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I am so pleased to rise today to recognize the great work that nurses do. I would like to pay tribute to some of the nurses from my riding and from northern Ontario. Some of you may not know, but Ontario is home to about 40 nursing stations. A nursing station is exactly what the name calls it: It is a primary care agency, where the people in charge are nurses who service small, rural communities in northern Ontario.

Nurses working in nursing stations are most of the time the only health professional in their community. They are it, they do it all and they see it all. Although some rotate in and out of their communities, most of them live in their community, so they are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 12 months out of the year, every single day of their lives, because people know where they live.

I used to oversee two nursing stations before I became a politician. Now, whenever I go to northern Ontario, I always stop by and visit the local nursing station. For those of you who've never been to a nursing station, the first thing you usually see as you come in is a large wall board with all kinds of fish hooks and lures. Remember, I told you that they've seen it all? Well, every single nurse in a nursing station knows how to take out a black and silver Shad Rap with two sets of treble hooks—that's a fishing lure—out of pretty well any body part that comes through the door, and they do this without leaving a scar. They're good.

Then, you would see the baby pictures. Nurses in nursing stations offer prenatal and postpartum care, and they do the odd unplanned delivery because the ambulance was grounded or did not make it in time.

Every fall, they deal with hunting accidents, either the accidental discharge of firearms or the misfortune of bowhunters. Did you know that most inexperienced bowhunters shoot themselves in the left foot? Every nurse in a nursing station knows that—ask my husband about that too. As well, there are the many cuts and slashes with hunting knives and filleting knives.

They also look after wounds from axes, handsaws and—the most common one—chainsaws from forestry workers. The chainsaws do leave a mark—a big mark. They just tear through the skin, the muscle, the tissue; they make a big mess.

1530

They also look after diabetes epidemics, as the rate of diabetes in our First Nations is so high. They look after women and children who have been victims of abuse, as well as mental health and addiction issues. They do home visits for palliative care people who want to stay in their own homes in their own communities.

I want to congratulate all of the nurses who have chosen to work in a nursing station. The work can be overwhelming, the demands are non-stop, and the recognition not that frequent. I want to say to Sylvia Primeau Beasley, infirmière praticienne; Christine Mathieu; Angèle Secord; and Francine Mathieu, who work at the Gogama nursing station: Merci. Thank you for what you do for your community.

I want to say to Michel and Lise Raymond, who spent years on the James Bay coast before working for 10 years at the Sudbury East Nursing Station: Merci. You've made Noëlville and St.-Charles healthier communities by your hard work.

I want to say to Lorraine Brabant in Folyet, Darleen Kidd in Killarney, Ester Sogarty and Renée Leblanc in Port Loring: Thank you. The people in these communities are lucky to have you.

To the nurses in Angling Lake, Armstrong, Beardmore, Bearskin Lake, Big Trout Lake, Britt, Caramat, Cat Lake, Deer Lake, Dubreuilville, Elk Lake, Fauquier, Fort Hope, Fort Severn, Kasabonika Lake, Kashechewan, Killarney, Kingfisher Lake, Lansdowne House, Mactier, Matachewan, Mattice, Minaki, Missanabie, Nakina, Mishkeegogamang, Pikangikum, Pointe au Baril, Round Lake, Sandy Lake, Sioux Narrows, Summer Beaver, Thorne, Upsala, Webequie and Wunnumin Lake: Thank you.

I salute you for the great work that you do across northern Ontario. You are the health of our region. Merci. Thank you. Meegwetich.

J'aimerais féliciter tous les infirmiers et infirmières de l'Ontario et souligner le travail exceptionnel qui est fait par les infirmiers et infirmières dans les centres de soins infirmiers du nord de l'Ontario.

Je vous souhaite une bonne semaine des infirmiers.

## PETITIONS

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition for saving our jails. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails with no public input; and

"Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent; and

"Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders would have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be great; and.

"Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened."

I've signed this and I will give it to Caleb from Meaford.

#### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents";

They ask "the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Viktor to bring it to the Clerk.

#### HOME CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have received this petition from a Mr. Diaz, with a Z. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and the minister responsible for seniors. It reads as follows:

"Whereas seniors who are disabled and/or ill are presently suffering at home; and

"Whereas the cost of a caregiver on a monthly basis who looks after a senior in their own home is around \$1,200, including room and board; and

"Whereas the cost of taking care of someone at home is at least 10 times less than the cost of a hospital bed; and

"Whereas most seniors with disabilities and/or illness are crowding an already overburdened health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly request that a basic government subsidy be established (based on a doctor's evaluation) which will pay at least a minimum allowance for a caregiver.

"Seniors deserve to live at home as long and as independently as possible."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign it as well.

#### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition in support of Bill 100, paved shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas" the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That" the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

I shall sign this.

#### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got a petition with thousands of names here, and it reads:

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I agree with it completely. I will sign it.

#### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, for which I would like to thank Lou Pinarello of Amity Road in Streetsville for having sent it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store;



boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

It's a very reasonable request. I'm pleased to sign and support it and to ask page John to carry it for me.

### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the denial of venous angioplasty and subsequent follow-up treatment of MS, multiple sclerosis.

"Whereas it is estimated that 55,000 to 75,000 Canadians suffer from MS, many are in Ontario;

"Whereas chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, or CCSVI, has been found in a high percentage of MS sufferers (>90%) and is considered a congenital vascular condition by the International Union of Phlebology (vein experts), of which Canada is a member;

"Whereas the preferred treatment for CCSVI is venous angioplasty;

"Whereas, in Canada, venous angioplasty is an effective, low-risk procedure that has been used safely for many years as a treatment for various medical conditions involving veins, such as May-Thurner syndrome, caval interruption, and Budd-Chiari syndrome;

1540

"Whereas over 12,500 CCVSI treatments have been carried out globally with reports of improvement in mental functioning, circulation mobility and, over time, marked improvement in quality of life;

"Whereas any medical procedure incurs risk and has varying degrees of success, CCSVI venous angioplasty risk is low;

"Whereas residents of Ontario with MS are denied access to testing and to this simple treatment and are forced to leave the country at great personal expense to seek improvement in the quality of their lives and are denied proper access to follow-up care after treatment;

"Whereas progressive MS sufferers, beyond pharmaceutical intervention, have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality when a simple, safe and effective treatment is not available to them;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allows people with muscular sclerosis to obtain venous angioplasty in Ontario;

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ensures payment for such treatment;

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allows pre- and post-procedural testing and follow-up consistent with any other disease and ensures payment for the testing and follow-up."

I'd like to thank my constituents for providing it. It's been certified by the table. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Caleb.

### HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario's jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations etc.;

"Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

"Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

"Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo's private member's bill, which calls for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman's powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act."

Of course, I agree with this. I'm going to give it to Viktor to be delivered to the table.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce the petition called "Grandparents' Rights" to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents as requested in Bill 22 put forward by MPP Kim Craitor; and

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I'm proud to sign my signature in support of this bill.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** "Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over environmental impacts as well as health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I affix my signature to these other signatures.

#### FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the fire protection adviser for the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the united counties of Prescott-Russell retired in 2008; and

"Whereas the position has not been filled as several attempts by management were denied; and

"Whereas, during this same period, positions were filled in other areas of the province of Ontario, leaving the above-mentioned united counties the only region without a fire protection adviser; and

"Whereas fire departments in these united counties currently have to wait four hours or longer before a fire protection adviser can arrive from another region to assist them;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the fire departments of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and Prescott-Russell ask the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to allow the Office of the Fire Marshal to fill the position of fire protection adviser immediately."

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005)" and any related acts, and instead "implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

As I'm in agreement, I sign my name.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from Joy Reycraft from Strathroy, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Orders of the day?



**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I think we were remiss this morning in not wishing the Minister of Agriculture a happy birthday today. So I want to correct that mistake of this morning and wish her a very happy birthday today.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 4, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 / *Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's indeed an honour to rise to speak to this bill—in support of this bill—on behalf of Andrea Horwath, our leader, and everyone else in our caucus. There is unqualified support for this bill. In fact, the only thing I could say apart from our unqualified support is, isn't it a shame it's taken the government so long to get around to it? Hopefully we can get this through before the House disbands for the summer.

I'm going to cut my remarks short. I know that will cause a lot of grief for my friends opposite, a lot of gnashing of teeth, because I know they love my oratorical skills. Having said that, I will be cutting them short because I think that really, we need to move this bill along. Of course it goes against the grain, because much as I love to speak about the valour of firefighters and the shortcomings of the McGuinty government, I'm going to take a little less time to do it, Madam Speaker. Nice to see you in the chair, by the way.

First and foremost, thank you to the firefighters' association of Ontario. Thank you for being here. Thank you for pushing the government on this issue. It really corrected a mistake the government made when they, of course, in 2005 did away with the mandatory retirement age, but neglected to consult with front-line workers, one of them being the firefighters' association, about how this would impact their profession. We are now, today and I hope very, very soon after it has been given due process, going to correct that mistake.

1550

Let's talk about the valour of firefighters for a minute. Let's talk about it because certainly every life, I would warrant in this House, has been impacted by the valour of firefighters. I know certainly mine has. I remember very clearly when a carbon monoxide detector went off in our house, and I didn't even know we had a carbon monoxide detector. This was way back. Thank goodness we had one. We thought, well, we had better do something about

it. The firefighters were there within minutes. The street was cordoned off around our house. We easily could have died. This happened early in the morning. It's an odourless—it has no smell—tasteless gas. Firefighters were there, knew what to do, and saved our lives.

I can think of another instance where the firefighters were responsible for saving a life in my immediate family, and that was my husband many, many years ago. He was way too young for this event to have occurred. He was in his 30s at the time, went out to play tennis, a very hot day, came back, felt sick, had to stop the car on his drive back, and felt he had pains. I looked in my little emergency handbook and I said, "You know, you're way too young to have this happen, but it sounds like you're having a heart attack," and called 911. Guess who arrived first, as they usually do? The firefighters. Guess what it was? Yes, it was a heart attack—saved his life in another instance.

Then, in my role as United Church clergy, we routinely ran a real open house, a free meal, a drop-in service for people who had mental health and addictions issues. Sometimes we would get 200, 250 people for a dinner run by a handful of volunteers. If we ever had a problem, we could bet on a 911 call, and firefighters would be there first. That's all we needed. Whether it was a fire issue or not, they were there first, resolved the problem and we kept going, doing the good work that that church did.

So thank you. Thank you on behalf of all Ontarians. Thank you for lobbying the government for this bill.

Let me just tell, for those who are watching at home and wondering, what this bill is about. Bill 181 would allow a mandatory retirement age for front-line firefighters, provided it's not lower than the age of 60 and is negotiated in the collective agreement. If a collective agreement does not contain a mandatory retirement age provision, it would be deemed to contain a mandatory retirement provision at age 60, and under the provision front-line firefighters would not be required to retire if the employer can accommodate them in non-front-line positions without due hardship to the municipality.

This is important because this addresses a concern municipalities raised and also addresses a concern that actually came to me over Facebook from one of my constituents who is married to a firefighter and was concerned about that. That's for you.

This is a more minor point, but it's an important one. The bill establishes a statutory duty of fair representation for firefighter bargaining agents and allows firefighters access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for duty of fair representation complaints. That's complaints against the union. Before this bill came to the House, firefighters, unlike other union members, would have to go the civil court system route, so that corrects an inadequacy also in the law.

It was interesting, in 2005, when the government did away with mandatory retirement, some of the language that was used around that. I remember, in particular, Ontarians could now choose when to retire. I know that it wasn't meant this way by my friends across the aisle, but



certainly the ring of Ontarians choosing when to retire has gained some darker meaning over the last few years. I don't know one senior in my riding, unless they were on a defined benefit pension plan, which only a third of Ontarians have—and interestingly enough, for those watching, not one member here has a defined benefit pension plan either. They can't afford to retire.

We see the fact that Ontarians can't afford to retire everywhere in our riding right now as those mall jobs, those minimum wage jobs that students used to do, get filled by the seniors who have to do them. That's the reality of retirement in Ontario. That is the reality. This is the problem that we face over and over and over again. I know we hear about it in all of our constituencies. Certainly we saw it in the federal election, where the New Democratic Party ran, in part, on doing something about the Canada Pension Plan.

We need decent pensions. It's absolutely unacceptable that our grandmothers and grandfathers, who worked so hard, who don't have the benefit of defined pension plans, should be forced to work in their retirement or live in poverty. And that is really what we're asking them to do.

You know, I remember years ago, with my daughter down in Florida, getting a cab ride from our vacation destination to the airport on the way back. The gentleman who drove the cab looked like he was 92 years old. It turned out that he was 89. We said to him, "Why aren't you lying on the beach? Why are you driving a cab? Surely you've earned the right?" And he said, "Well, I used to be a small business owner. My business failed. No pension. I don't work, I don't eat." Is that really, I would ask, what we Canadians want as our reality? I would venture that it's not.

That puts a great onus on this government, who has had a majority now for eight years, to have done something about it, which they have not. We in the New Democratic Party have proposed some changes that would assist people in actually having a retirement income.

I know that there will be those across the aisle and those at home who say, "Well, why didn't they invest when they should have in their registered retirement savings plans?" Well, anybody who's lived through the recession, anybody who's followed the stories of the collapse of the markets, anybody who's heard of people like Bernie Madoff—made off with a lot of money, is what he did—will know that those plans are not airtight; that those plans, depending on what vehicle you invest in, go up and down. I know many in my riding, many I hear from across Ontario, who invested routinely, did all the right things and, bang, lost most of it.

Again, is this what we want? A casino system, in a sense? Maybe you're lucky, maybe you have a good financial advisor; maybe you're not. Maybe you get to retire; maybe you don't. Certainly, that's not what people in Europe think is the appropriate reaction to seniors in our midst.

To get back to this bill, here we are correcting a problem. It's a problem that the government clearly

didn't see in relation to firefighters. But also, when they moved in 2005 to do away with the mandatory retirement age, they didn't foresee some of the consequences in other industries as well. So I would ask my friends across the aisle that they look at the reality of retiring, or not being able to retire, in the province of Ontario and start to do something about it.

Certainly, the pension benefits guarantee fund—this is a fund that, if your company goes under and you've invested, you still get something—is still stuck at \$1,000 a month. I don't know anybody who can live on \$1,000 a month. We ask our people on Ontario disability, those people who are disabled and can't work, to live on that, but that's another story for another day. That's also egregious. That's also appalling. People who can't work shouldn't be forced to live in poverty either. But certainly people who've invested, who expected some pension return, should be guaranteed that. Why is it that when a company goes under, the banks come first and the employees come last? That's the situation in the province of Ontario.

Two thirds of Ontarians don't have pension plans. I pointed out that we here don't have a pension plan—that's sad too—unlike our federal counterparts. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm on the Freedom 95 plan, so I will be standing here—with any luck at all, if my voters vote me in—until I'm 95, because I certainly cannot afford to retire.

But again, we see this as the government of the mall. It's not the government of Main Street. It's not the government of small business. It's not the government of the senior coming up to retirement. It's not the government of that person who happens to be unlucky enough to be in a profession where they don't have a defined benefit plan. This is a government that's steering us towards the American reality, and I quite frankly speak on behalf of most Ontarians and say we don't want that reality. We would like some security in our old age.

What does this plan do? I mean, these are front-line workers: people who are going in for fire suppression, people who are going into dangerous places. Do we really want a 75- or an 80-year-old to be rushing into a burning building? I mean, it's an obvious oversight that the government didn't see in 2005. I guess our question as New Democrats is, here we are in 2011, six years later, with about 10 days left of the House sitting, so why is it coming forward now? The gentlemen who are sitting in the members' gallery—certainly, their association has been lobbying for this for many years. Why, finally, in the setting days of this government, are we bringing it forward? This is absurd. This is a no-brainer. I know we're all going to support it. I know my Progressive Conservative colleagues are going to support this—I know across the aisle. This could have been done years ago. It should have been done years ago. It should have been done at the same time, in 2005, when they were looking at this issue in the first place. It's sad.

1600

To say that Ontarians can choose to retire is really like saying that one out of six children who live in poverty in



Ontario can choose to eat or not, because that's the reality of our people coming up to retirement.

I put this out there because it's such a glaring reality that we all face, and I can't believe that in eight years of McGuinty government so little has been done to help them. Not only has so little been done to help them, but we've added to their grief by, of course, raising the hydro rates unnecessarily, putting in the so-called smart meters that attack people coming up to retirement and in retirement because they're at home all day. When the highest rates are on, they're at home—not to mention small business.

This is a government that also, of course, has brought in the HST, which is a flat tax that necessarily, as all flat taxes do, attacks those who can afford it least. So this is a government, clearly, that has no thought when it comes to policy or programs for seniors.

I have a little motion on the order paper that was asked of me by—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The Minister of Energy seems to disagree with me, but he's young. What does he know about what it must be like to be 70 years old—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I will withdraw that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** He's maybe not quite so young.

There was a very simple little motion I had on the order paper; it's still there. It was put forward, through me, by the West Toronto Support Services. God bless their cotton socks for all the good work that they do with seniors. They said, "It used to be the case in Ontario that seniors could get into museums and galleries for free. Could we not at least have that?" We've got the HST, we've got hydro rates, we've got stupid meters; we've got all of this happening. Can we not at least have something, some sign from this government that they think about seniors? But even that has sat on the order paper for years without being acknowledged.

To get back to Bill 181, what else can we do for firefighters? Well, there is still more we could do for firefighters. In fact, there is still more we could do for all of our front-line workers. We had the OPP in here the other day, and they were asking of all of our parties that we do something about the fact that they are so lightly staffed, that their staffing has not kept up with the general population. We talk about enforcement, but if you don't have enforcers, laws do not get enforced. They talked about the situation, particularly in northern Ontario, where officers could be an hour apart from each other. It's extremely dangerous, not to mention dangerous for the constituents in those ridings who aren't getting the police service that they need. They were here asking for something again—again, again.

Another bill that's on the order paper—this is a good place to mention it—that should have been given some notice by this government is my post-traumatic stress

disorder bill for front-line workers. This would be not only for the firefighters but also for the police, also for paramedics who inspired the bill. What we ask of front-line workers, in many instances, is to go into phenomenally dangerous situations. No matter how you screen, when somebody comes into the profession, just like no matter how well you screen their health, firefighters, as we know, with a presumed diagnosis bill, which we were also extremely supportive of—I know that our leader, Andrea Horwath, brought in an earlier version of that bill: presumed diagnosis for certain cancers of firefighters—we should also have presumed diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder.

A number of people I've talked to who have tried to get claims through WSIB had to try to prove that their post-traumatic stress disorder came from their job and not any other factor in their life. This is wrong; this is simply wrong. This is something that we do for those who serve for us in Afghanistan and other places; why can't we do it for our front-line workers here? It's just a very simple thing, inspired, again, by paramedics but supported by firefighters and police.

Again, it sat on the order paper for several years. I've reintroduced it, and trust me, I will reintroduce it again after October 6, no matter who's sitting across the aisle. Even if it's us who are sitting across the aisle. There's a promise.

Do we New Democrats support this? Absolutely, we support this. Have we supported it for years? Absolutely, we've supported it for years: from 2005, when the government changed mandatory retirement, thinking and saying, "Ontarians can now choose when to retire rather than having to retire," when the reality, as I've gone into in some detail, is that most Ontarians cannot afford to retire at any age. That's the reality, and to say that this gives them the choice of when to retire is really an insult, a slap in the face, when there's only a third that have defined benefit pension plans.

Despite that and despite not consulting, clearly, quite well enough with groups like the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association as to how that move would impact their membership, here we are: the dying days of the McGuinty government, the McGuinty regime, hoping—we, on this side of the floor—that we can get this through quickly enough that this could actually begin to impact some lives, as requested by firefighters.

Thank you, firefighters. On a fun note, I always enjoy going out with my Lansdowne station. Every Christmas we go to St. Joe's and deliver presents to the children who are in the hospital that year. It's great fun. There's nothing like a decorated fire truck and a fire chief playing Santa Claus—lots of fun. But more importantly, thank you for all the good work you do for all Ontarians in keeping us safe. Thank you, personally, for the work you've done for my family at various instances in my life.

I hope that this bill will pass extremely quickly, that it will get committee time and that it will get back here and be passed before this House rises. To that end, I will now relinquish the rest of my time. I know that my colleagues



in the Progressive Conservative Party are also not taking a great deal of time. We're not putting up other speakers ourselves. The onus is really on this government to get cracking to do it and to do it now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I listened to the presentation from the member from Parkdale–High Park, and I appreciate her comments regarding firefighters and trying to get this through as quickly as possible.

It was on March 10 of this year that a resolution or a motion was introduced by the MPP for Algoma–Manitoulin, Michael Brown, calling on the government to introduce legislation allowing for the mandatory retirement of firefighters at age 60. The resolution was passed unanimously in the Legislature last March, so I think we are trying to move collectively as soon as possible.

We had an experience recently with Christopher's Law, which came before this Legislature and which passed fairly quickly. At committee, we had an all-party agreement to, in the morning part, do the presentations and, in the afternoon, do clause-by-clause. It was done and brought back in a pretty expeditious fashion to this Legislature, where it was voted on and passed. It got third reading, and I think last week it received royal assent.

So let's hope we can move as quickly on this bill. I think we all agree. We know what the bill is about, as was mentioned by the member from Parkdale–High Park. I think the key is having all three parties agree at committee to not spend too much time. I think we agree.

I had the opportunity last Friday to attend a retirement party for firefighters. It was held just outside of my riding; outside of Scarborough Southwest. I had a chance to attend with my wife, and I did speak to a number of the firefighters. They're happy to see this bill in front of them and to see it moving at a fairly rapid rate. There are many here today, as was mentioned earlier—many of them were introduced earlier—to see this bill go through.

Hopefully we can end the debate today and move it to committee as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

1610

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I want to follow up on the comments from the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Last year, my wife and I visited the site of 9/11 in lower Manhattan. There's lots to do in Manhattan, and I wasn't that interested in going down, necessarily; my wife had been spending time at Macy's and in Times Square, but we ended up down there and we went into a fire station memorial for those who lost their lives at 9/11.

There, we met a retired firefighter from Brooklyn, an Italian fellow. He had two sons. He lost one son in the collapse of the twin towers. He told us his story. He spent nine months looking for his son in the rubble, and I can only imagine what he saw in that rubble. He felt he was fortunate; they did find a piece of equipment from his

son. Of the thousands who died, you found nothing identifiable.

He has spent the last nine years—and we're coming up to the 10-year anniversary—in this little museum down at the site of 9/11 explaining to people like me and my wife what it's like to be a firefighter and why, whether they're professional or volunteers, no matter what their age, we consider firefighters heroes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Indeed, it is a pleasure to spend a couple of minutes talking about Bill 181. Although this time will be allotted for comments on the presentation from the member from Parkdale–High Park, I'm not sure she spoke much about the bill.

I just want to take the opportunity to say that this is a good move forward. I'm trying to recollect here. Two or three, maybe four years ago—time flies—I was able to take part in an exercise at the fire college or fire school here in Toronto; I'm not sure what the terminology is. They outfitted me with all the gear—

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** They had one in your size, Lou?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** They did. I happened to keep the—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** How far can you drag the hose, Lou?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Well, you know, I managed. But I was just going to say—

**Interjection:** I thought you had to be a certain size to be a firefighter?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** No, there's no discrimination here.

I guess the point I'm trying to make is, with all the gear and trying to follow through on some of the exercises they perform, I cannot imagine what it would be like in real life when they encounter those challenges, whether it's a smokey house, whether it's crawling under some space. So I said to myself, "I'm a little bit over 60, but I'm not sure I could have done that when I was 40." Not to say that I wasn't in good shape. I was in good shape, at least I say so myself.

I think what we're doing here today is really recognizing the safety of our citizens, whom we're trying to protect in the best possible way we can. The human part of that protection, obviously, requires some agility, some strength and some capability to be able to perform that duty.

I think we all agree this is a good move in the right direction, and I look forward to supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to comment on the speech from the member from Parkdale–High Park on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

I would like to get on the record that I have received, from one of my municipalities in Parry Sound, concerns with the bill. It's from Seguin township.

They wrote to me that "Council of the township of Seguin does not believe that this proposed legislation is in the best interests of this municipality and requests that the government of Ontario conduct further research to



identify potential problems and consequences associated with this proposed legislation.”

They go on to say in their actual resolution, “Whereas the impact of such legislation will have an immediate and significant impact on the ability of Seguin Fire Services to maintain and supervise their municipal fire force; ...

“Therefore be it resolved that the council of the Corporation of the Township of Seguin believes that the legislation as it currently exists is not in the best interest of the municipality and recommends that the government of Ontario needs to identify the impacts, consequences and costs of this proposed legislative change. We ask the government of Ontario to conduct the appropriate analysis and to consult with the municipal employers and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs prior to taking any legislative action.”

I would like to get that on the record so that the government will do its due diligence and that this will go to committee and give a chance for Seguin township to enunciate what their concerns are. It's a municipal volunteer force. The legislation doesn't affect volunteer forces, but I suspect it must be to do with somehow some supervisors who are full time. Their concerns, whether they're legitimate or not, I would like to be heard by the government. I hope they will take the time at the committee stage to listen to the concerns of Seguin township, that they get their chance to make these concerns known.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Parkdale–High Park has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thanks to all who contributed.

To start out with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, this is why committee hearings are important. I've also received some communications from municipalities. A lot of it is based, with due respect, on some misinformation. They may not know that there is no mandatory retirement age now and that in fact it could cost them way more if someone went on working year after year after year. But again, at the committee is a good place to raise those issues.

To the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, I believe I did discuss the bill—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Very, very, briefly.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** That's fine. We're supporting it. Let's just get on with it.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk gave a very good rationale for why we need a presumed diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder among front-line workers; There couldn't be a better example than 9/11 of why we need that kind of legislation to protect those who rush into circumstances that we rush out of.

Finally, to the member from Scarborough Southwest, it's good that this was raised last March. That's a year ago. We voted unanimously on this a year ago. Here we are again debating and discussing this bill. Hopefully, we're not going to be discussing and debating it a year from now.

Our hope in the New Democratic Party is that this gets speedy delivery to third reading through committee, that it comes back here before we rise for the summer and

that finally the association gets what they've been looking for for these many years.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thanks to all who took part in the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to have a few minutes today to speak to this particular legislation. I want to begin by welcoming to the Legislature—I don't know if he has been acknowledged yet, but we do have here with us today the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Fred LeBlanc. Fred, it's good to see you. It has been a little while. I think the last time was sharing a bowl of spaghetti and a few meatballs, you and I, a few months back. I think our local association president, Eric Nordlund, was with us that night at that table. It's good to see you again as well. And I think we have some members here in the members' east gallery. I don't have their names or the associations that they are from, but it's good to see you and have you here today as well supporting this particular piece of legislation that our government has brought forward.

It was interesting to listen to the comments from the member of the third party. I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about those, but I'm always excited and anxious to hear how the members of the third party are going to politicize just about anything that comes to this place—well, not just about anything, but everything. But there's a difference between opposition and politicizing things. Unfortunately, I think that's what we heard today—nothing from a policy perspective. But enough on that.

What we're happy about today is that this legislation recognizes the distinct nature of the firefighting profession. I think it also recognizes the relationship and the continuity of legislation that our government has brought forward since we've had the privilege to be in government since 2003.

The title of the legislation is the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011. It's interesting: When I was getting prepared to speak today, I wondered if at some time in the future we may see this sort of provision—and I'll get to the provision in a minute—actually expanded to perhaps include more of our protective services. I think, obviously, of police. I think the police do a wonderful job in all of our communities in terms of what it is they do for a living in terms of protecting us. I think that the bona fides are the reason and the justification for what we're doing here today: an exemption to the mandatory retirement legislation. I think that the bona fides, you could make a pretty good case, also apply to the work that the police services do. I can picture some of our people who are 55 or 60 years old, and some of the physical work that they're required to do providing some challenges for them as they get a little older. I don't think that's unfair to say. It's difficult work that they do, and I'm not sure that at some point in the not-too-distant future we may in fact see something come forward that recognizes the work that they do.



1620

However, that's not what today is about, because there is no one who argues, as we've heard from all sides, about the distinctive nature of the work that the firefighters do, and that's why the legislation is before us today. As people are fond of saying—I don't always get the quote exactly right, but, "When everyone else is running out of a building, the firefighters are running into the building." So that's what brings us to the point we're at today.

A member from the second party, the official opposition, mentioned something—and I was going to talk a little bit about it, too. The events of 9/11 have galvanized the thinking around this legislation, I think it's fair to say. The work of the firefighting profession was always respected by people, but I think the images that many of us saw and witnessed on television on that fateful day have become, unfortunately, part of our memories and will remain so, I would expect, for many of us, and have only added to our ability to come forward with this kind of legislation.

Before I get into the legislation, I want to talk about a little bit else that we have done when it comes to working with the firefighters. This one has a bit of a local flair for me, a local flavour, and that is the work that we did on presumptive legislation when it came to working with the firefighter profession.

Fred may remember a gentleman by the name of Joe Adamkowski—I see you nodding up there. My local chapter in Thunder Bay, the local association—and I'm a little short on the memory right now, Fred. I forget the president at the time. But Joe was a firefighter who was very ill and in fact has succumbed to his illness.

It was during that time that the firefighter associations across the province of Ontario—with a great amount of work and input provided by the local Thunder Bay association, I would suggest—were working very hard on the issues related to presumptive legislation. Their associations all across the province—the rank and file, and their association leadership, provincial and local—were working very hard on this particular issue. As we know, they have met with success on that issue. I'm going to just reference some of the notes that we have on this particular topic in terms of exactly what it is we did.

The first step, of course, brought forward presumptive legislation for full-time firefighters, and then we moved forward in November—I think it was November 2009, when the presumptive legislation was extended to volunteer and part-time firefighters as well. Of course, what I mean when I say "presumptive legislation" is, for people who are watching and interested in this topic, that there are eight illnesses, diseases, cancer-related, that, when established with a certain level of years of service, are automatically assumed, unless it can be proven otherwise, to have been work-related. They would be covered through WSIB. Those are: brain cancer with 10 years of service; bladder cancer, 15 years of service; kidney cancer, 20; non-Hodgkin's, 20; colorectal, 10; leukemia, 15 for certain types; ureter for 15 years; and

esophageal for 25 years. Of course, heart injury is also part of the list—within 24 hours of fighting a fire or participating in a training exercise involving a simulated fire emergency. All of those that I have just listed are part of the presumptive legislation that we brought forward.

I mention that because I think it is consistent with where we are today. It is a recognition on the part of our government—not just today, as I think one of the previous speakers was trying to imply—to not only the firefighters in the audience here or watching on TV, but to others interested in this particular topic, the implication trying to be that we've been a bit late to the party. I mention this to be very clear that we have for years very clearly recognized the distinctive nature of the work that firefighters have done, and today's legislation that we're debating only reinforces that.

So the bill, again, is called the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011. I do want to give a nod to our member—he's not here with us today—from Algoma-Manitoulin, Mike Brown. I think it was in March of this year that Mike brought forward a motion calling on the Legislative Assembly to do exactly what we are doing here today.

Let's go back a little bit if we can, to 2005 and the mandatory retirement legislation. I have a bit of a funny little story. It won't take me long. When I was at Lakehead University studying history some years ago, I had a professor by the name of Ernie Zimmerman. Ernie was teaching me Russian history, and on occasion Ernie would invite some of his students back to his condominium to have what he called a little bit of Russian pepper vodka. I'd never heard of it until I attended Ernie's condominium. Ernie used to invite us back there for a little bit of fun.

Ernie, unfortunately, is no longer with us, but when it came time for Ernie Zimmerman to retire, he took up the cause in a great way on behalf of and with the support of other faculty at Lakehead University to oppose mandatory retirement. And, of course, we in this government did just that: brought in legislation to that effect. I don't remember if my old professor was around at that time or not to witness what we did, but here is what we did: In 2005, the Legislature eliminated mandatory retirement in Ontario for most employees with the passage of the Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005. That legislation amended the definition of "age" in the Human Rights Code to remove the upper age limit of 65 as it applied to discrimination in employment.

However, the Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act did not change the bona fide occupational requirement exception to their prohibition against discrimination in employment. To be clear, what this means is that the Human Rights Code continues to allow for mandatory retirement where age can be shown to be a bona fide occupational requirement. Importantly for the amendment we are discussing today, mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters engaged in suppression activities has generally been found by the Human Rights Tribunal to be a bona fide occupational requirement.



That obviously links us to what I have just read. There was a mention—I forget who it was, the official opposition or the member from Parkdale–High Park—about municipalities; at least a reference, if not by name, to municipalities about impact. It's important to know and share with the people in the province a couple of things.

One is that, as explained to me, the average age of retirement currently for—not all, but the average age for most firefighters in the province of Ontario right now is 57 years of age. There's a number here that I'll read into the record: There are approximately 11,000 full-time firefighters in Ontario. We understand that only 65 of the 1,254 firefighters who retired between 2005 and 2009 were over the age of 60. Clearly the reference that was made earlier by a speaker from one of the opposition parties in terms of the potential impact is not nearly as significant as the implication may have appeared to be.

The other thing that I would mention in that regard, in the same vein, is that it's my understanding that two thirds of all collective agreements in the province of Ontario currently accommodate what it is that we are discussing here today. I understand that the legislation also contains a provision that is going to allow municipalities two years to prepare and adjust for this.

I think it's also important to note that what we're doing here today does not impact volunteer forces. Not that long ago—I think it was just before Christmas of this year—I had a great meeting with some of the volunteer people in my communities that I represent. My riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan has six rural municipalities in it, and at least five of them were represented at that meeting: Mike Horan from Oliver–Paipooonge, Henry Mattas from O'Connor, Amy Spencer from Conmee, Dale Ashbee from Neebing and Tim Beebe—Tim did a lot of work on organizing this meeting—from Upsala was there, as well as Blair Arthur, and he's from out of my riding, from Shuniah. We all had a wonderful meeting about the volunteer service and the challenges faced by them. I can tell you that it is the volunteer services, I understand, that are thankful that this legislation is not impacting on them.

1630

Clearly, in the context of northwestern Ontario that they represented to me in the meeting I had with them—they referenced a range of issues and challenges, I think it's fair to say, affecting the volunteer people who work on our behalf in the province of Ontario. Certainly in northwestern Ontario, one of the issues and challenges that they have and that they brought forward to me is that it just seems every day like it's becoming more difficult to recruit people into the volunteer services—at least from the meeting that I was part of, that was representing five or six different municipalities and a whole lot of people and a whole lot of geography. I think it's important to mention that.

One of the other things I will say here as well, before I close, is in terms of the continuity of our government. As I said earlier, there was an implication made that we're late to the game. That's why I thought it was important

not only to talk about this legislation today, but to remind people of the work that we've done with our professional firefighters with the presumptive legislation as well.

Four or five years ago, perhaps a little longer, we brought in a wonderful program to help the volunteer side, which was a capital program. I remember very well that many of the members in the Legislature, on all sides of the House, were very supportive of this program and very happy that our government did it. We all know that those small rural detachments have a very difficult time in terms of meeting their capital needs. If I remember correctly, it was about \$50,000 per service, I think, in that range. I can remember attending announcements and events in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the region. In fact, I think I might have gone up to Dryden to do one, although I don't recall for sure. But it was a program that was extremely well received, and I think it's important that we make note of that.

Today's legislation is not about that, but I think it shows this continuity that we all want to ensure that the people of the province of Ontario are aware of when it comes to dealing with our professional firefighters in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, that's about 15 minutes for me. I'm pleased to hear, or assume, based on comments that I've heard, that all sides of the House are going to support this legislation. It's a good piece of legislation. It is work that is consistent with what we've been doing in the province with our firefighters, professional and volunteer, and I'm very proud of it.

I look forward to the vote at second reading, and hopefully it will be back here quickly to be passed before the House rises in a few weeks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I must admit, I had a bit of a laugh at the member's expense at the beginning of his comments. The reason was, he stood up and said that he was concerned that the previous speaker, the member from Parkdale–High Park, had politicized the debate of this bill. I mean, to an extent, everybody politicizes all debate of every bill in this chamber. But what was really interesting was, he followed up with comments where he said he was really happy that his government had brought this bill in, and patted himself and the McGuinty government on the back for doing so.

If we're talking about politicizing, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. The bottom line is, I think we're all satisfied that the bill is on the floor, I think we're all satisfied that we're here debating this bill, and I think we're all satisfied that there will be some unanimity in the vote for the bill, because it's long overdue.

While we're talking about politicization, that government has been in office for most of the last eight years, and I've had firefighters come and visit me for the four that I've been around here, asking for a variety of changes to this particular act, the fire prevention act. This was one of them. So it's high time that this government got around to it.



I dare say that this has an awful lot to do with the fact that we're somewhere within 10 sessional days of the end of this term. Let's hope that it goes to committee, gets back out of committee and gets through third reading, and that they absolutely have the opportunity to take advantage of what they've come here to witness, which is the realization of this.

Let's not debate the fact that we all have ultimate respect for our first responders. Firefighters, police: They are folks that we can all respect, and respect them we do. We know what it takes to get into the business that you're in. It's not a business like any other business, any more than this is. The difference is, we play games where our lives are concerned. You take it for real, and thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Just to comment again, I would second my friend from Thornhill that of course the comments from Thunder Bay–Atikokan are political. We're all political here. If we're not being political here, what are we doing here? That's what we do.

Suffice to say, at the end of the day, rather than talking about it, we should be passing it, so I was very pleased to hear from our esteemed House leader from Welland that in fact that's what we're going to be doing this afternoon; that very few people are speaking to it and that we are going to be voting on it soon, because there's nothing like our poor firefighters hearing everybody say that we should get on with it and then talking and talking all afternoon. We will get on with it this afternoon. Hallelujah, I say. Finally we have some resolve in this House to move. Let's get it to committee, as you've heard; let's do that quickly, and let's get it back here. Let's have it read for third reading. It's been a long time since 2005. It's been six years by my reckoning, so six years is long enough. Let's get some protection for our firefighters and first-line responders. In fact, let this be the first of many such moves we make on their behalf.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to rise and comment on the speech by my colleague the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and certainly to support Bill 181.

The member from Thunder Bay actually did an excellent job of cataloguing some of the health issues that we have recognized already in previous legislation that firefighters who are involved in fire suppression are particularly in danger of, and unfortunately, a history of many of their members having those conditions, and we have recognized that.

But my riding is, in some respects, much like the member's riding, in that I too have a university, and university professors were very involved in having us eliminate the mandatory retirement requirements. Unfortunately, the firefighters got swept up in that, and I think everyone here recognizes that there in fact are legitimate reasons why firefighters who are involved in fire suppression do have a bona fide job requirement of some absolutely astounding physical job requirements when

they are called into a burning building and need to rescue people or lug equipment, or to deal with the heat even though they've got all the equipment—a tremendously oppressive atmosphere. I've had the opportunity, with firefighters, to go into some of their training facilities, both in Guelph and in London, and getting a very brief sense, for a few minutes, of just how hostile that environment is and the reason that mandatory retirement is a bona fide job requirement, because of those physical—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech of the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. Actually, the speaker before, the member for Parkdale–High Park, in her speech, talked a bit about carbon monoxide detectors and how the fire department had been first on the scene to provide help in the situation she was describing.

On that issue, I would simply like to point out that there is actually a private member's bill that is, I think, before the general government committee as we speak, and that is Bill 69, the Hawkins Gignac Act. It was put forward by the member from Oxford, and it would require the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in new homes that were built, and it's certainly one that we would like to see get passed. I bring this up partly because the Gignac family does have roots in my riding of Parry Sound. One branch of the family lives in Parry Sound, and the bill is named for the Hawkins-Gignac family from the tragedy that happened when, I believe, a fireplace malfunctioned. With carbon monoxide, it is odourless and you just don't know it's there unless you have a carbon monoxide detector, and that's why it's so important. It can really make a difference in saving lives, as smoke detectors make such a difference in alerting a family to a fire so they can get out of the home as quickly as possible.

1640

So I would simply like to make a plug for the member from Oxford's bill and say that we certainly support that bill and we'd like to see it become law. It could make a real difference in saving lives here in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Let me offer my thanks to the members from Guelph, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Thornhill and Parkdale–High Park for their comments on my short speech.

I guess I can't help but comment that if the only criticism that can come from the opposition on this bill is that this piece of legislation did not happen soon enough—and I guess that's why I spent some time talking about other work that we've done with the firefighters. If that's the only criticism that can come forward on this particular piece of legislation, I guess I can't help but comment that both parties had the opportunity to do work in this regard. The NDP, from 1990 to 1995, were privileged to be the government in the province of Ontario;



the Conservatives, very recently, from 1995 to 2003. Five years here and eight years there, and unfortunately, not only were they late, but it never happened. I guess that if it's a timing issue, we can't help but discuss that.

There's not a whole lot more to say on this. I think this is one of those rare pieces of legislation that comes to this place that is broadly supported by everybody in here. I think that it is clearly obvious to anyone who is following this debate on television that this is something that's going to quite certainly pass second reading and then probably, quite certainly—although I never want to assume anything in this place. It certainly, at this point, seems to have all-party support, and we quite frankly think that, not too far in the future, we'll see this bill passed. I'm thankful for it.

It is important, once again, to remind people about the presumptive legislation that we have brought in previously, going back a number of years, that recognizes certain types of cancer, as well as heart disease, as being connected directly in certain circumstances to the work that's done by professional firefighters in this province, and ensures that their family members will be covered should they succumb to those illnesses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I know how to take yes for an answer, and it looks to me like that's what we're going to have to take on this bill, because we've heard all three parties debate; everybody supports this legislation and obviously it will pass second reading.

I'll simply repeat, by way of starting, a comment that I made in the last short comment that I put on the record, and that is that this bill receive speedy approval by committee and come back to the House in time for us to pass it through third reading before we adjourn for the summer and before the election.

I'm going to share my time today with my colleague from Leeds–Grenville.

Who exactly are firefighters? Who are these people? Why do people decide that, to make a living, they're going to go into burning buildings? First of all, I can say that they're the people whom none of us ever want to see at our homes. But when we have to see them at our homes, we're really happy when they show up.

The answer—I happen to know a bit about who these people are. This comes from an early stage in my life when I was a young radio reporter. When you're in the radio reporting business, you get to report on everything. I got to the point on house fires particularly where I could do the report without being there. It would be something like, "The fire started in sheds at the rear of the building and worked its way up to the third floor, breaking through the roof, where firefighters were able to get a hold on it." I can still do the report by rote from memory.

I'm making somewhat light of a very serious situation, because it always involved life and limb—not the life and limb necessarily of the people who were inside the building, because often they had gotten out, but always the life and limb of the firefighters, the people who were there to respond to the call. They were people who were

driven to do this kind of work. In every case where I met a firefighter or a district chief who had been in it for life—and most of them were—they were people who said, "This is the work that I want to do. I want to intervene. I'm fascinated somehow by fire, and I want to be able to put it out and save people's lives." It was a calling. Not unlike some of the people in this room are called to serve the public in our particular way, these folks are called to serve the public in theirs. And we can do nothing but admire that drive and that spirit that brings them to the job because, at the end of the day, it serves our needs in a very real way when we are in danger.

I might call attention at this point to Listowel, Ontario, where we saw two brave firefighters give the ultimate sacrifice not very long ago: Raymond Walter, age 30, and Kenneth Rae, age 55. The first thing I should do in putting these names on the record is extend heartfelt sympathies and thanks to these two people, because as I've been talking about life and limb, there are two people who paid the ultimate price to save the lives of others. Dedication and service like that, in this particular case to the people of Listowel, Ontario, does not go unnoticed. Service like that to the province of Ontario does not go unnoticed. We thank our firefighters, and in this case the families of Mr. Walter and Mr. Rae, more than we can say because they have paid a supreme price as well.

The 8,500 professional firefighters across Ontario who dedicate their lives to help protect and save others deserve all the recognition and accolades that the province of Ontario can bestow upon them.

I've been representing the people of Thornhill for four years. Thornhill consists of two municipalities, neither of which, at this point, is at a level where we use volunteers. Both are at a level where they have professional fire departments. I see the representatives of the unions handling firefighters' concerns when they come for their annual political pilgrimage to this place, and I see them from Markham and from Vaughan. I've had four years of meetings, and I've also had informal meetings along the way because we meet in the riding, and this particular issue of mandatory retirement always comes up. I'm delighted to be standing up and talking about it today because it means real action on something they called attention to early in my political career so that I would understand what their needs were, and to be able to stand up today for them and on behalf of this bill really means something.

A Progressive Conservative government is and always has been committed to ensuring that our communities are safe and secure. I might focus for a moment on the word "secure." Security comes in a lot of forms. In the province of Ontario, people want security for the jobs that they do. They don't want to worry that they're going to go away. While we have seen some movement in the employment figures of late, we haven't seen enough movement as of yet. We know, from studies that have been done independently, that people are concerned about the security of their jobs, and approximately 30% of all Ontarians still fear for those jobs.



People are concerned about security when it comes to their health, and the fact that there will be doctors and there will be hospitals that can take care of them when they need those services. People are concerned about the security of the education system for their children, and people are very concerned about their personal safety and security.

That's where this bill lands: personal safety and security. I don't ever want anything to happen to me. I don't want anything to happen to my kids or my grandkids. I want my property to remain secure. But nobody has an absolute guarantee that that's going to be the case. The guarantee that we should always have is that if the unimaginable happens, the people who we need to respond to our gravest concerns are there. We should be able to go to sleep every night knowing that they're there, and so I want firefighters who are happy, firefighters who are equipped, firefighters who are capable, and capability and this issue of a mandatory retirement age go hand in glove.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And fairly paid.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** And fairly paid, yes. I would agree with my friend from Welland.

We will continue to work with our firefighting community to ensure that they have the support and the resources that they need to ensure fire awareness and prevention. First responders respond for us. Now it's our turn to respond for them, and that's what we're doing here today.

Mandatory retirement age does not take away from the accomplishments of firefighters or our recognition of their dedication to Ontario in any way. It simply acknowledges the fact that firefighters are the special breed I've been talking about and need to be treated in a special way that is particular to them and particular to some other people in the first response area that will have to be addressed over time, not particular to people like us where we have folks ranging from age 30 up to age 80 in this Legislature. You can still do this job, because all you really have to do is stand on your feet here, and arguably not even that. You guys have to climb up and down the ladders and you have to carry people like me over your shoulders. I don't want somebody my age and in my condition carrying me on their shoulders.

1650

I want to also add a word about what firefighters bring to us as legislators in terms of things that we could do. My colleague mentioned Bill 69, which pertains to the Gignac family and the loss of life suffered there as a result of the absence of any warning about carbon monoxide. I spoke to that bill when it was presented. It sits in committee after second reading passage. It's something that firefighters in this province want, and it deserves to see the light of day and also pass third reading sometime before this Legislature ends. I wanted to get that on the record.

Anyway, on this legislation, it is proposed to standardize the retirement age across the province at age 60. I'm absolutely in favour of that. Our party is in favour of

that. I'll say again, we want this bill to be passed through third reading before we rise for the summer.

This legislation would also give firefighters who feel their unions are not representing them properly an option to approach the labour board directly. This could be a major issue. It is a major issue for some others. I can't speak to the issue of what all union locals in the entire sphere of firefighting do across the province of Ontario, save to say that the ones who come to see me seem to be doing a good job.

The issue has been talked about by the Ontario Association of Professional Fire Fighters for almost five years. However, no action has been taken by this government, and it's time. Whether this was motivated by a coming election or not is not the case, but it is shameful that it took this long. This is the government that can cut secret deals but can't do what's right for one of the most important service providers we have, essential service providers, people who keep our communities safe. Eight years in office; the election's down the road. Never mind. It's here; be happy.

We need decisive action on this issue, which this proposed legislation finally provides, finally affords. We can only hope that this government will finally see the light of day and not delay its passage. Most in this Legislature, if not all, are in agreement that the bill should pass. The leader of our Progressive Conservative Party supports this legislation. The rest of our PC caucus supports Bill 181. Mandatory retirement is appropriate in occupations that are highly physical and potentially life-threatening every time they are called to duty.

As I say, I would be concerned if somebody who wasn't 100% physically fit were involved in rescuing me. Both the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs support this bill. There is no reason why everyone in this House shouldn't support it as well.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** As the member for Thornhill said, I'm pleased to share my time with him in support of Bill 181.

For those who know me, although I did spend almost 15 years in the private sector, my roots are in the municipal sector, and just prior to my election I was a chief administrative officer. My first foray into municipal government was when I was elected mayor at the age of 22. I guess when I was elected mayor of Brockville, I learned early on the importance of our emergency personnel, the people who protect our people and our property. Early on in my first term, we had a very tragic fire death on Perth Street. After the area was secured, I was allowed by the chief and the personnel to go to that site and see the devastation. It was a life-changing experience for me to be on a site where there was a fire death.

I became very close to the fire department. I always looked forward to negotiations. They were a unique group because they always asked to negotiate with council, and I was always excited about the group that would come and talk to us.



I'm going to end my speech, for those firefighters who are in the crowd, with a Dr. Taylorism, because I think that was something that really stuck with me. I remember meeting with the firefighters twice since I've been an elected as an MPP and talking about this, and they gave me a pen with my three favourite sayings that Dr. Taylor prescribed to our fire negotiations.

We're here to support mandatory retirement for firefighters. We're here, as all three parties, to support Bill 181, and I can't think of a more important bill. I supported the member for Algoma-Manitoulin's private member's bill. I look forward to this going to committee and being passed before June 1.

I was speaking to the chief in Brockville, Chief Harry Jones, whom I've known for many years. In Brockville, under the FPPA, there are 37 firefighters. That includes dispatchers, firefighters, the training officer, fire prevention, the deputy and the chief. Their collective agreement is the one—for those who know something about this bill and about this industry, basically, in that city, it's OMERS. Most people realize that you need those 30 or 35 years to be able to get your pension. That's why most folks, depending on the age when they started—in Brockville, for example, some retire at 55, some at 57, some at 60, but for the most part, they're in that range.

As well, it has been mentioned by previous speakers, although I'm speaking about a full-time force predominantly—for those who deal with volunteer—some people call them part-time firefighters—this legislation provides some flexibility. I know that one of our members, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, had a municipality concerned. I'm sure that, given the makeup of their particular force—maybe they've got some older members; maybe they're concerned about replenishing them. Obviously, the two years is an issue in some cases; in some, it may not be. But it does give the municipalities that flexibility.

As well, the other chief who is near and dear to my heart, because I was CAO of the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, is a chief whom we shared between the township and the town of Gananoque, a very small town, a separated town, in my riding. That's Chief Gerry Bennett. In Gananoque, he has three full-time firefighters and about 26 volunteers. Two, I think, have about 26 years' service; one has about five. In the township, he has, I guess you'd call it one and a half full-time—if you want to use the way it splits between the town and the township—and about 87 volunteers. So we've got a diverse group in Leeds-Grenville.

I think this is an extremely important piece of legislation that needs to be put forward.

I do want to mention some of the other challenges. When we talk about police sometimes, we as MPPs talk about giving them the tools to do their job. I think we need to turn our minds to giving our firefighters the tools to do their job as well. One of the issues in my municipality is communications and the huge amount of money it's going to take to convert our communications in Leeds and Grenville from analog to digital. It's going to cost us some \$6 million.

One of the issues, obviously, in our community, given the fact that we're close to the United States and we're upgrading our system, is this whole issue of interoperability, and that is to have ambulance and police and fire be able to talk to each other. We hope, in the months ahead, with the new federal government and with our election looming in October, that—the whole issue of infrastructure and qualifying municipalities to be able to upgrade their communications, to assist those on the ground in the fire service.

In my riding of Leeds-Grenville, especially in west Leeds, the topography of that area, the fact that there is a prevalence of granite, causes a very unique challenge for communications in the fire service, and I think that it's something that needs to be addressed by governments. As I said, we ought to upgrade from analog to digital but, as well, provide new paging systems and other things like that.

I do want to echo things that were said. My colleague from Thornhill mentioned Bill 69, the Hawkins Gignac bill that my colleague the member for Oxford, Ernie Hardeman, has put forward. I'm on the general government committee, and I would sure love for us to deal with that bill and to have it brought back to the House to be passed before we adjourn. That's something as well that's of interest.

With the background that I've had in municipal government, I think it's crucial for us to move this bill forward and to act upon this. We've talked at great length. We had speeches very, very similar to the ones that we've had this afternoon, when the private member's bill was discussed. This is something that I think the folks in the galleries have come year after year after year to talk to us about, and we're finally moving it forward. There is consensus among the party leaders and the House leaders to move this forward.

1700

Let's realize that firefighters are firefighters for life. I know there's a mutual aid meeting tonight in Leeds and Grenville. I know there will be a number of honorary members, members who are in their 80s, who will be attending those meetings and, although they obviously can't participate in an active way, still want to meet with their brothers and sisters in the fire service. I know that meeting is going on tonight, and I told Chief Jones—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Anybody from Athens going to be there?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** There's going to be lots there, Jeff. You should come and see Athens. They're missing you.

Gerry Bennett and Harry Jones are great chiefs, and I think they are looking forward to this legislation.

I want to end with the comments that I talked about first. Every time we would meet with the firefighters to negotiate, before they would lay out their book, they would always have—I call them Dr. Taylorisms. When they talked about their proposals that came to council, they always said, "They're morally sound, legally defensible and reasonably practical." It was funny, because I would always sit back as the head of council and say—it was normally Mike Bailey who was the chief nego-



tiator of the firefighters in my day, and I would say to Mike, "Lay the words on me, Mike. Lay the words on me. I want to hear those three phrases." And I think, really, Dr. Taylor's comments, comments that municipal councils would hear at the time of negotiations, ring clear today. This proposal in this bill is morally sound, legally defensible and reasonably practical. It's got support from all the parties. I think it would be a great gesture for us to move this forward, bring it to committee and provide that mandatory retirement change for firefighters to recognize their importance in our communities, in our townships, in our towns and in our cities. This would be a great jewel for us, as a Legislative Assembly, to come together in a non-partisan way and move this forward.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to share the time with the member for Thornhill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Speaker, me too. Some of my best friends are firefighters—me too. And in my case they really are: Dave Cleary, "Beefy"—I went to school with a lot of these guys and they ended up being firefighters. As a matter of fact, they're at the retirement age now, so, guys, give it up. It's time to give the young guys a rest.

Anyway, I do want to take a quick moment. Before I was elected, I formed and chaired a group called the Friends of the Firefighters. We raised \$110,000 to buy thermal imagers for the fire department. Then we regrouped and formed another session and raised another \$50,000 for the Brant County Fire Department on the volunteer side. Then, just recently, we re-formed as Friends of the Firefighters and raised \$27,000 to buy carbon monoxide detectors to be given to the fire department to hand out.

Unabashedly, I'm a very strong supporter of firefighters; I've worked with them since being elected. In opposition, for one of the rare moments in which a private member's bill did get passed if it wasn't a government one, we passed the Firefighters' Memorial Day Act. It was my first private member's bill, and it was the first private member's bill I got passed. I'm proud to say that it was supported by all members of the House.

I also worked on the memorial in Gravenhurst to be improved, and then we switched that and turned it into the memorial at Toronto, and supported another private member's bill in order to get that memorial built here in Toronto. So I appreciate the work that was done behind the scenes by a very large number of people and supported.

Regarding our first election, because I was the opposition critic, I offered the first-time capital expenditure for the fire departments in the province of Ontario, and in 2003 we fulfilled that, and the presumptive legislation and on and on. So the government has been showing its support.

Just in case we do want to play politics, go back to 1995 to 1999 and find out what Bill 85 was all about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions? Comments and questions?

Seeing none, Mr. Sousa has moved—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Oh, sorry; the response, then. The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'll respond to my friend from Brant, who had the only comments. For once we agree. I'm absolutely blown away.

What can I say? I'll simply repeat a couple of things that I brought forward in debate, only because I think they matter. What we have to do here is continue the effort of working with our firefighting community, our policing community, the people who provide the security that every family in Ontario has come to expect over time. The fact that the government has seen fit to bring forward this bill for debate now, the fact that you see unanimity in this House and therefore this bill, in all likelihood, will get back here and pass third reading before we adjourn for the summer is a very positive indication of how everybody who represents you and represents everybody else in the province of Ontario feels about the work that you do. I used the line somewhere in the speech about the fact that you are first responders and that it is in a way a great pleasure for us to be able to respond to needs that you've had for a very long time, so I'm pleased to participate today in that sense.

I think it's worth noting, in the few second I have left, that a majority of pre-existing agreements call for mandatory retirement, 50 of 75 agreements in the province of Ontario, so this bill would set the mandatory retirement age to 60 years of age if a collective agreement including a mandatory retirement age does not already exist. What that comes down to is a level playing field for everyone, and what it also comes down to is a level playing field for the people of Ontario, who have a right to expect a firefighter who is completely at the ready at their door in their hour of need.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I know there are people who thought the debate was over, and I had hoped to be able to get into the debate earlier, but unfortunately, I had other commitments. I did want to have an opportunity to speak to this bill and didn't think that I could quite fit it in with a two-minute question or comment.

I do, first of all, want to welcome the firefighters who are here with us today, and I want to assure you that I'm not going to use all 20 minutes, so we are going to end this shortly, I believe.

I come from a riding where the firefighting is primarily volunteer, but I do have a couple of professional departments—not that the volunteers aren't professional; I don't mean it that way, but it's not their only professional way of making a living. I do have a professional department in Pembroke that is certainly the largest.

I want to first talk about my relationship and my respect for firefighters in general, because I also, not to the extent that my friend from Leeds–Grenville was, was a member of the council in the village of Barry's Bay, where we worked very closely with our volunteer fire department. I was constantly amazed, and I continue to be amazed, at the amount of work these people do in



being prepared to do the job that we hope they never have to do. The firefighter is the one person you never want to meet when they're actually on the job because it probably means that you're where you wish you weren't. But the amount of training and preparation and following procedures and stuff that they go through that most of us never see is quite remarkable, and if that's the case at the volunteer level, you can only imagine what is happening at the professional level. We're very, very thankful, I know in my riding and certainly in the town of Barry's Bay, that we have a competent service, even though it is volunteer.

Now, on the bill itself, this is something that in my time here the first person I was ever addressed by on behalf of the professional firefighters was Barry Quinn, and I know he's still coming to visit us here at Queen's Park and still making his case on behalf of his brothers.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Turn around.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, he's not up there. We appreciate—I certainly appreciate the work that he has done and continues to do.

When he first raised this issue with me, I said, "Well, now, isn't that interesting?" Maybe we're coming at it from different perspectives, but my perspective was quite simply, I said, "You know, Barry, if I'm in a burning building"—with all due respect, I know people are training harder and they're in better shape than they have ever been because we have more ways of maintaining our physical fitness. But I said, "If I'm in a burning building, I'm really hoping that the guy who's coming in to get me out of there is not over 60. I'm hoping he's about six foot six and 250 pounds, built like a linebacker, and he can throw me over his shoulder and get me out of there." I don't believe that's the kind of work that I really want to see somebody doing who is getting close to what is accepted as a retirement age by most people from any job, being 65.

In the kind of work that a firefighter is expected to do, I'm pretty comfortable that we should call it a day at the age of 60. If there's another role within the department, I believe there are provisions in this legislation and certainly in some collective agreements that, depending upon the work that the specific person does for the department, if they're a chief or whatever and they're not actively involved in an active suppression role—there are some provisions for allowing them to stay on beyond that.

The other thing that I noticed, given the collective agreements that they have, is that the vast, vast majority of firefighters are retiring before the age of 60 already. This legislation only puts into law what is already the practice, and I think it is the right practice. It's the right practice and the law itself, of course, will be the right law.

I know there are some concerns that have been raised on the part of municipalities as to whether or not this will have a financial effect on them, but as we said, in the vast majority of collective agreements it already exists. I think that in the big picture it is going to have a minimal effect because of the fact that, even without a collective agreement, most of them have reached the needed number of years to retire by age 60 anyway.

I think this is a positive step forward. I know we support it as a caucus. I'm looking forward to seeing it get to committee so that we can hear from stakeholders across the province whether there are ways to improve it; and if there are objections, we do want to hear them, and I'm sure that they can be addressed and dealt with. But at the end of the day, I think we're all satisfied that this is a right and proper thing to do and that this Legislature should be able to have this bill entrenched in law before we leave for the summer.

I'm adding my support to that of our critic Garfield Dunlop and the PC caucus, and hopefully we can move expeditiously with that bill forthwith.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions? Further debate?

Mr. Sousa has moved second reading of Bill 181. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

This vote will be deferred. Do you have a deferral slip?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Madam Speaker, I think I can help you out here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, be deferred until Wednesday, May 11."

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** On division.

*The House adjourned at 1714.*

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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie



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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day







## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Israel Independence Day</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5842
<b>Fundraising</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5843
<b>Brent Robillard</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5843
<b>Paul Primeau</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5843
<b>Ryan Ellis / Mark Visentin</b>	
Mr. Ted McMeekin .....	5843
<b>Land use planning</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5844
<b>Youth services</b>	
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5844
<b>Hindu Heritage Centre</b>	
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5844
<b>Israel Independence Day</b>	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	5844

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

<b>Standing Committee on Government Agencies</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5845
Report deemed adopted .....	5845

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>917866 Ontario Inc. Act, 2011, Bill Pr48, Mrs. Elliott</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	5845
<b>French Language Services Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 193, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur les services en français, projet de loi 193, Mme Gélinas</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	5845
Mme France Gélinas .....	5845

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Nursing Week / Semaine des soins infirmiers</b>	
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5845
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	5846

Mme France Gélinas .....	5847
--------------------------	------

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Correctional facilities</b>	
Mr. Bill Murdoch .....	5847
<b>Replacement workers</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5848
<b>Home care</b>	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	5848
<b>Highway improvement</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5848
<b>Office of the Ombudsman</b>	
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5848
<b>Photo identification</b>	
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5848
<b>Multiple sclerosis treatment</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5849
<b>Home warranty program</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5849
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Kim Craitor .....	5849
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5850
<b>Fire protection services</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5850
<b>Dog ownership</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5850
<b>Paramedics</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5850

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5851
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5854
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5854
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5854
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5854
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5855
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5855
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5857
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5858
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5858
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5858
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5858
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5859
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5860



Mr. Dave Levac .....	5862
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	5862
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5862
Second reading vote deferred .....	5863

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 10 May 2011 / Mardi 10 mai 2011

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011, Bill 173, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur des lendemains meilleurs pour l'Ontario (mesures budgétaires), projet de loi 173, M. Duncan</b>	
Hon. Gerry Phillips .....	5823
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5823
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5825
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5826
Mme France G��linas .....	5828
Ms. Leeanna Pendergast .....	5829
Third reading vote deferred .....	5831
<b>Securities industry</b>	
Vote deferred .....	5831

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PR  SENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Kim Craitor .....	5831
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	5831
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5831
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5831

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Government contracts</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5831
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5832
<b>Energy policies</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5832
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5832
<b>Freedom of information</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5833
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5833
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5833
<b>Freedom of information</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5834
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5834
<b>Government contracts</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5834
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5835
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5835
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5835

## Assistance to farmers

Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5836
Hon. Carol Mitchell .....	5836

## Government contracts

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5837
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5837

## Job creation

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5837
Hon. Sandra Pupatello .....	5837

## Job creation

Mr. David Oraziotti .....	5838
Hon. Sandra Pupatello .....	5838

## Hydro rates

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	5839
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5839

## Hydro rates

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5839
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5839

## Social services

Mr. David Zimmer .....	5840
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	5840

## Smart meters

Mr. Steve Clark .....	5840
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5840

## Freedom of information

Mme France G��linas .....	5841
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5841

## Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5841
---------------------------------------	------

## DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFF  R  S

<b>Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011, Bill 173, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur des lendemains meilleurs pour l'Ontario (mesures budg��taires), projet de loi 173, M. Duncan</b>	
Third reading agreed to .....	5842
<b>Securities industry</b>	
Motion agreed to .....	5842

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PR  SENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5842
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*Continued on inside back cover*





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des débats  
(Hansard)****Wednesday 11 May 2011****Mercredi 11 mai 2011**Speaker  
Honourable Steve PetersPrésident  
L'honorable Steve PetersClerk  
Deborah DellerGreffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 May 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Hindu prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO BY REDUCING CONTRABAND TOBACCO ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 APPUYANT LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE PAR LA RÉDUCTION DU TABAC DE CONTREBANDE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 9, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act/ Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Bill 186 is entitled "Reducing Contraband Tobacco." It doesn't seem to go to the point of eliminating tobacco, and I question that. I don't know whether this government is concerned about rubbing some groups the wrong way.

My opposition colleagues and I have stood in this House on many occasions asking for the crackdown on illegal tobacco, and time and time again over the last eight years these requests have been ignored. Now we have this bill before us that reduces contraband, ostensibly, but it doesn't seem to work to eliminate it. Why is that? That's the question I'll put out there.

Illegal tobacco is destroying communities. Along with cheap smokes, the contraband market brings with it weapons, drugs and an obvious disregard for the law. Illicit tobacco is ruining corner stores; we've heard that a number of times in our finance committee. It's robbing the Ontario government of somewhere between \$500 million and \$600 million a year in taxes. Corner store operators have been forced to dig into their pockets to comply with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, yet the McGuinty government turns a blind eye to those selling illegal cigarettes to underage children. Again, when you have a high-tax item like tobacco, the legal trade cannot compete with the illegal, tax-free tobacco trade.

This has been deplorable. It's been eight years now. Eight years ago, we didn't really have any illegal tobacco of any significance. Eight years ago, we didn't have the

greedy, tobacco-tax-grab Liberal government in power. Eight years of tobacco tax hikes have created this crisis, this mess. What we see now is an unintended partnership between government policy and the underground economy. It's put tobacco farmers, manufacturers and retailers at a competitive disadvantage. It reminds me of a quote by Samuel Johnson: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

Nowhere is this more prevalent than in my area, Haldimand-Norfolk—obviously Brant county with Six Nations. In Caledonia, home of the five-year land dispute, residents have reported seeing children transporting illegal packs of cigarettes into town on the handlebars of their bicycles. We have smoke shacks on Ontario government property just outside the town of Caledonia.

I'd like to talk a bit about Doug Fleming of Caledonia. He attended the Queen's Park media studio in 2007 to talk about smoke shacks. Mr. Fleming had grown tired of watching those kids ride into town on their bicycles with illegal smokes, and eventually he decided to put an end to it.

In an attempt to draw attention to the matter, Mr. Fleming set up his own smoke shack in town. When he suggested to the OPP that he was breaking the law and should be arrested, the OPP refused. While in the media studio, Mr. Fleming said, "I had turned to a life of crime in an attempt to have the law enforced, but it wasn't working." In conclusion, Mr. Fleming said, "If Premier McGuinty wants to create a smoke-free Ontario, it seems to me that he's not doing a very good job."

Come down to Caledonia. You'll see the smoke shacks blatantly located on Ontario government land—on MTO property on provincial Highway 6—and on Hydro One property. One of them is under one of the large towers that militants have blockaded any wires going up on.

Allowing an illegal market undermines this government's very own anti-tobacco policy. People buy cigarettes out of the trunk of a car. It's significantly cheaper. If you're underage, you're not asked for ID. And again, why would teenagers pay \$62 for 200 cigarettes when they can get them for \$6? Lowering taxes, increasing enforcement, and beefing up education and information is an answer. Basic economics kick in on the tobacco trade.

Along with illicit tobacco come other criminal elements, as I've mentioned. I could see supporting Bill 186 if the bill's goal was to eliminate illegal tobacco. That's not the goal. It's to reduce illegal tobacco—maybe reduce it something like from 50% to 45%; we were not given the figures.

Three years ago the federal government and the RCMP announced a program. What's happened? Contraband has gone up. Illegal factories have gone up, and even the legal ones—the federal government licenses the legal ones. There are well over 50, legal and illegal, in Ontario and Quebec. Organized criminal activity has gone up. So much for that strategy.

There's a simple way to eliminate contraband tobacco. Two years ago, I introduced a bill, the Tobacco Tax Reduction Act. This was done previously in 1994 to eliminate the incentive, to eliminate the motive, for illegal use. If tax policy, plus enforcement, education and border control, breaks the back of the illegal trade as it did in the early 1990s, then government can go into that cycle again and slowly start increasing taxes.

People argue that high taxes are necessary to prevent smoking. The problem is, close to half of the people pay no taxes at all—zero taxes, a zero tax market—hence, in that group, consumption goes up.

This tax-cut solution is not new. In 1994, then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Premier Bob Rae and four other provinces realized illegal tobacco was out of control, like it is now. They dropped taxes and shut down hundreds of illegal smoke shacks overnight. They brought it down to something like 10% of the illegal rate—considerably less than it is today. To quote our local MP of the day: "In my riding alone I have 200 smoke" shacks "on the reserve. I have had many people including the band council and most people on the Six Nations say ... 'would you please do something about this problem. This problem is hurting our community.'"

0910

For 20 years, I worked for the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario. As I mentioned, back in the early 1990s, there were 200 smoke shacks locally. Taxes were crashed. Overnight—I was there literally the next morning—200 smoke shacks disappeared.

Cutting provincial taxes can only be done on the understanding that the federal government will follow suit, and I look to the spirit of co-operation we had in 1994. Again, the federal government and five provinces slashed taxes and shut down the shacks. It's up to both levels of government to address the criminal networks that have set up shop across the country.

As far as legal manufacturing, it's fine for the federal government to license, but they also have to inspect. They have to go into those native communities that have federally licensed manufacturing operations.

In 2009, Cancer Care Ontario and Hamilton's public health department spoke up on contraband tobacco. There was an article in the Hamilton Spectator, which I quote: "We are very concerned about the impact of inexpensive contraband cigarettes on smoking rates." This is Rob Cunningham of the cancer society. I'll continue his quote: "We do know it's very bad in southwestern Ontario and has gotten worse in the last couple of years."

I'll also quote Jan Johnston, a public health nurse: "It's the contraband that has the negative effect on all the progressive tobacco control measures because of the availability and affordability."

We know of the high school surveys that are being done across the province. There was a study a while ago by the Canadian Medical Association Journal. It indicated that anti-smoking strategies aimed at young people are not working due to the accessibility of cheap illegal smokes: "The widespread use of First Nations/native brand cigarettes, especially in Ontario and Quebec, presents a serious challenge to tobacco-control strategies." This was a warning from Dr. Russell Callaghan of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

There is little doubt that the government has lost control of the tobacco market. I'm not sure if allowing this illegal trade to continue for the last eight years is the Premier's way of being politically correct. I do recognize that there is mention of words like "native" and "Indian" inscribed in this legislation, and opening up or reaching out for facilitation or discussion with elected band councils, not that the elected band councils are involved in the illegal tobacco trade; they have very little control over this as well.

But for whatever reason, what we've seen over the last eight years indicates to me that there is no excuse for this government to lose control of the tobacco market. We are probably unique among jurisdictions in North America in losing control of half the tobacco trade.

Now, we all know that this is a revenue bill; it's not a health bill. It's a revenue bill introduced by a revenue minister doing the bidding of a Premier who never saw a tax he didn't like—there's quite a list of tobacco taxes that have come in over the last eight years.

We see legislation. It sets the sights very low by "reducing" contraband, because this government has dug the hole so deep and allowed such a criminal network to get so organized that if they tried to eliminate contraband, all hell would break loose in certain parts of Ontario.

I'd like to quote Gary Grant, spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco: "We're talking about a situation where 175 organized crime groups are smuggling illegal cigarettes, drugs and guns into this province and the McGuinty government is unwilling to act. It's really bewildering the government seems to be so out of touch with the reality of the situation." That was a press release from that organization on March 4 of this year, underlying the fact that they were "shocked" at the time to hear the Ontario Minister of Revenue "reveal that the McGuinty government has decided not to introduce anti-contraband tobacco legislation...."

I guess the pressure ramped up; the big guns swung around on this government and here we are in the dying days of the McGuinty Liberal government finally, after eight years, debating legislation to do something about illegal tobacco.

Just to quote Mr. Grant and his organization further, "We gave the McGuinty government a grade of F for their response to contraband tobacco in 2010...." Well, here we are: It's May 2011 and yet another change of mind by this McGuinty government. Again, look at what you have created.



I'll quote my former employer, the Addiction Research Foundation, also known now as the—well, I call it the Addiction Research Foundation; there's a good reputation there—"Contraband tobacco accounts for 43% of all cigarettes consumed by Ontario high school daily smokers in grades 9 to 12." Obviously, those are our children, our grandchildren.

Right now, when it comes to tax policy, tax hikes are no longer forcing people to quit smoking; it forces them to find a cheaper alternative, whether it's that van or that trunk of a car or the smoke shack that you can visit at Six Nations or most other native communities across this province—certainly in Caledonia and elsewhere. There's probably about 200 smoke shacks in the riding of the member for Brant.

As far as tax policy, if you continue to jack up taxes, at a certain point you do reach the economic law of diminishing returns. This was reached a number of years ago. In my view, there is an approach, as I've said: tax cuts, coupled with enforcement, coupled with border control, coupled with a ramped up education program, something we have not seen from this government—something that we really have not seen from the federal government, even though they've had a three-year program now. I know some posters were out; I don't know whether anybody in this room has seen any of those anti-illegal-smoking posters. But it's going to take a bit more than this if both the provincial and the federal governments are going to have any impact on this war against organized crime.

With respect to the legislation and the proposal for Ontario to get involved in native community taxation, I'll pass on some information coming forward from the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, AIAI. This is from Grand Chief Randall Phillips. This is an editorial in our local Turtle Island News. As we would know, the First Nation leaders have been meeting with the Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs—not the Ministry of Health, by the way. The quote: The changes introduced last week, as he says, "stand in direct opposition to the rights and interests expressed by AIAI in those conversations." This is from Grand Chief Phillips. He said he was taken by surprise. "There are many outstanding issues regarding jurisdiction, economic development and trade that are not even referenced in the proposed amendment." This is the Ontario government legislation. Further on—again, we do hear this a lot—it's putting forward the argument "that the cultivation and trade of tobacco is an inherent aboriginal right and the province has no jurisdiction on the issue." This is from Phillips.

0920

This is the deputy chief now: "Tobacco was a trading commodity for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, and is an existing aboriginal right under section 35 of the constitution." This is a statement from Deputy Grand Chief McCormick. He goes on to say, "Additionally, the province has yet to state its position on the legality of First Nation manufacturers that hold only a federal tobacco license but not a provincial one."

So the legislation proposes to be working more closely with native communities, with the Mohawk reserves. The only thing I can say with respect to that: Good luck.

They make mention of federally licensed manufacturing facilities, and it's fine for the federal government to give these licences out for tobacco factories, but there has to be inspection. There have to be government bureaucrats who are willing to work in native communities, to sit inside these factories and document what's going in, what's going out, and further to that, what else is happening with respect to the supply chain.

I've been involved with the tobacco business in many different roles over many, many years. I used to work in tobacco; I guess that'd be 1972. I know a little bit about tobacco. I'm not sure if either federal or provincial government employees know an awful lot about tobacco farming, the movement of raw leaf, the threshing, the shredding or the processing, let alone the manufacturing and the retailing. I'm not sure whether federal bureaucrats are up to the job with respect to dealing with the native tobacco trade. And as far as facilitation with native communities working with—whether it be legal or illegal—tobacco, these kinds of discussions, say, around the manufacturing, have to include the non-native manufacturing as well. They have to include the non-native retailers as well.

As far as the enforcement end of this, it's not going to have any impact unless we give our police the support—the moral support and the financial resources—to do the job.

I don't think this bill goes far enough. I do recognize that, at least at the 11th hour, they've come forward with something and are willing to at least talk about contraband tobacco.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour to stand and follow my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk. He's certainly a statesperson in this place and always has very reasoned and thought-out comments.

Let's be very clear about the role of tobacco in our province: It kills 13,000 people every year. It kills one person every 40 minutes. If you look outside any high school, if you look outside ministry buildings, about 50% of the butts you find are contraband butts. This is a problem, there's no question, and we in the New Democratic Party see it as a problem. The question is about what sort of solution.

This, I might say, is a typical McGuinty government bill. It goes an inch when you need a mile. It's a punitive bill. We don't think punishment is the answer for any addiction issue. We think education, treatment—a whole range of responses is what this issue demands. To that effect, there are some great templates that have been produced in this province. The nurses' association and the cancer society, among others, have produced many that this government could really simply adopt, but doesn't.

The real problem here is the role of health promotion versus treatment of disease. If you look at the comparison



between the two budgets, for health and for health promotion, you'll see very quickly that there's very, very little emphasis that the McGuinty government puts on health promotion of any sort—never mind on this issue, which is a scourge, there's no question.

Some 13,000 people die a year; one person every 40 minutes. Children, especially young women, are taking this up. We have flatlined in terms of our war on tobacco in this province. We need to do way, way more. So I look forward to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to stand in my place today to speak about the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011. This certainly is a long-standing problem and one that we have to address as more of the youth are picking up these cheap cigarettes in the schoolyards and elsewhere. We then get into trying to break them of this habit. As adults, we know so many people ourselves—my wife was one—who smoked for so many years. She quit cold turkey about 20 years ago, and it was just amazing that she was able to do it because a lot of people can't give up the habit.

What we're going to do is increase oversight over the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province—that's necessary because we know the tobacco companies are involved in this as well, trying to get more of their product out there—and to permit police to seize illegal tobacco found in plain view and arrest people. I just can't understand how we can let these criminals prey on our kids in our schoolyards.

This bill will enable us to do more of that and, for the first time ever, require fine-cut tobacco to be marked so we'll be able to identify it better. That's where the bill is going. It's going in the right direction.

I was pleased to work with Mayor Bob Chiarelli in the city of Ottawa in 2001 and 2002 to bring in new legislation for this whole province with the smoke-free Ottawa bylaw. I was pleased to work with people like Dr. Cushman and so many people around Queen's Park when the Liberals brought in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and we got rid of all that advertising that normalizes cigarettes that the kids were seeing in retail—the last vestige of advertising of this terrible product by cigarette companies.

So I think this is a positive bill that will bring us closer to being able to do something to protect our children.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to re-enter this debate on the contraband illegal tobacco act put forward by the Minister of Revenue.

I'd like to compliment my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk. He has been a constant source of information in this Legislature, given the amount of contraband tobacco and illegal smoke shacks in his own community. He has reinforced in this chamber, on several occasions, the need

for the government of Ontario to act on these illegal contraband tobacco smoke shacks.

I did have an hour-long debate where I was able to contribute my view in a very meaningful way to this debate. At the time, I was able to acknowledge several members of my caucus who, I believe, have been leading voices in cracking down on illegal and contraband tobacco in Ontario.

I'd like to start with my colleague from Carleton—Mississippi Mills who, as you will recall, put forward one of the first pieces of anti-smoking legislation in Ontario. I then move over to my colleague from Simcoe North who, as our corrections critic, has often been a leading voice on cracking down on illegal tobacco, as have my colleague from Halton, my colleague from Thornhill, my colleague our health critic from Whitby—Oshawa, my colleague beside me from York—Simcoe and then, of course, my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk. This is a legislative group of people who have fought against this illegal trade, the underground economy, putting these cigarettes in the hands of children.

They could have done more. Sadly, for the last eight years, they have done nothing. It's very disappointing that they think that at the 11th hour they can get away with this. But not this time. No one believes them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'll get a chance to speak a little bit more fully on this, and I think people will not be surprised when I raise the issue in regard to those issues that affect the First Nations directly. The government is trying to do what I think is essentially a good thing, and that is to—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Order.

0930

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Boy, they're having fun this morning, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** What don't you understand about "order"?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can I go now? Thank you.

Anyway, I was just saying that the government generally is trying to do something that I think is positive, which is trying to control access to tobacco on the part of kids. I think we can all agree that that is a laudable goal; I don't think that's an issue. However, there are particular concerns when it comes to First Nations, which I'll talk about later, that I think need to be taken into consideration. First Nations have been pretty clear, in speaking to the ministers responsible, that there needs to be further dialogue before this particular piece of law goes forward because, as they see it, what the law essentially does is put their band councils under administration in a weird kind of way. I think there's far too much example in the province where the federal government specifically, and in some cases the provincial government, has had a pretty colonial attitude when it comes to how they deal with First Nations.



Is there an issue? Absolutely. Is there an issue that the government wants and needs to deal with? Absolutely; I don't disagree. But I don't think that you can do this in such a way that doesn't take into consequence the serious concerns that First Nations have, which are legitimate concerns, and I'll speak to that a little bit later in debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Haldimand–Norfolk, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you to the members for Ottawa–Orléans; Nepean–Carleton, our revenue critic; and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

The member for Beaches–East York used the phrase that this is legislation that goes an inch, not a mile; it's not going far enough. The stated goal is to reduce contraband. Let's set our sights a little higher: Let's eliminate contraband. Let's adopt the goal that was adopted by the federal and five provincial governments back in the mid-1990s.

I regret that this legislation is a revenue policy. That's the mindset of this government: to look at tobacco through the lens of revenue. A revenue policy on this is not enough. The revenue enforcement officers who will be going on farms and into factories are going to need an awful lot of training to know a bit about the tobacco industry. The enforcement aspect of this will come to naught if we don't support the officers and if we don't resource the officers.

Regulations are not enough. There are already 200 regulations in Ontario with respect to the tobacco industry. Half the people in the industry do not follow these 200 regulations; they follow zero regulation. We can add more regulation, as will occur with any piece of legislation, but it's not going to have an awful lot of impact when close to half of the tobacco industry in Ontario is illegal; half the industry pays no tax at all. This is the harvest that we reap when we jack up taxes to the extent that half the people involved in this industry, and the customers, walk away and don't pay any taxes at all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to put on the record that generally we're supportive of the direction of this legislation. I think most people would see the direction as a laudable one to try to deal with the issue of how we make sure that we don't make the proliferation of tobacco products so available to young people. I think we all understand the importance on the health front of making sure that we limit that as much as possible.

But in saying that, there are a few things that the government needs to take into consequence, and to try to go back and fix the problem that they've created here. Those are specifically the issues and concerns raised by First Nations.

I want to put on the record a letter that was written by one of the grand chiefs to the minister just recently. She would have received this letter on May 5. I think it's going to lay out a little bit what the issues are from the First Nations' perspective. I'll speak to it a little bit more fully.

He writes the letter to the minister responsible, saying, "I hope that this letter finds you in good spirit and health. I am writing to you on behalf of the member nations of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians to express my deepest concern regarding Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act." He says, "While I understand that Bill 186 is one component of the wider smoke-free Ontario campaign"—and there is an acknowledgment there on behalf of the First Nations, saying that they understand what the government is trying to do. However, they say that "the legislation itself is primarily focused on punitive actions against producers and buyers of tobacco products," and hence is part of the problem here.

We're not doing what we need to do at the front end, which is that we need to be much more aggressive as a province—the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health Promotion—in really trying, by way of education, to discourage the use of tobacco. I think it's part of the point that's being made here. If you just deal with the punitive side, people are still going to do it.

I grew up, as you, Mr. Speaker, at a time when tobacco was probably much more prevalent in our society than it is today. Kids smoked at a fairly young age. Unfortunately, we're seeing the same thing repeating itself again. If we go to a lot of schools in my riding or, I would argue, ridings here in Toronto, we're seeing far too many children—children, specifically—who are using tobacco products. They do so, a lot of times, buying contraband cigarettes. That is the truth. Why? Because cigarettes at a corner store are expensive when you put all of the tax in. Kids, like a lot of people who don't have a lot of money, try to buy it for as cheap as they can. So if you put the emphasis strictly on the punitive measures, kids are going to buy the tobacco because it will still be available.

I just make the point—and I don't agree with this, but I make the point—that there is a lot of contraband in our society, a lot of it is very harmful to health, and we speak about drugs. We have very punitive measures to deal with people who are in the business of selling drugs in our society. But it still finds its market; there are still people who want to buy it. And no matter how punitive you are to try to discourage the distribution of the product, you will still have people who want to buy it. This is the reality.

How do you turn that around? I think one of the things that's lacking in this bill—and this is the point that the First Nations are making—is that we need to put more emphasis on the front end of trying to discourage people from the use of tobacco. It will not entirely go away, but every dollar spent, I would argue, on the prevention side and the education side is far more effective than every dollar spent on the punitive side, because you will always have somebody who will be in the market to produce these products and to sell them, even if you throw it underground, and the proof of that is what's happened in the drug trade. We saw in the United States a huge, huge initiative on the part of the federal government, dating back to the Reagan and Clinton eras, where they went to the "war on drugs," and at the end of the day, do you



know what? The banditos are still making the drugs and people are still buying them, in larger numbers, and all they've effectively done is filled their prisons.

Does that say that I condone the use of drugs? Absolutely not. They're the scourge of this planet; they're the scourge of our communities; they're the scourge of families and individuals. But clearly the approach of the punitive side has not had the effect that people thought it would have. I think that's the point that the chief makes about this particular initiative, in saying that if you put your emphasis on the punitive side—and he doesn't say this in the letter, but I'm making the connection that it's not going to be as effective as it would be if you did it on the education side, trying to prevent people from using these products. I think the proof of that is what has happened in the drug trade.

He goes on to say, "In its current form, Bill 186 presents a narrow set of interests while ignoring those of First Nations. Provisions that place regulatory authority of raw leaf tobacco under the Ministry of Revenue, that penalize producers and sellers of 'unmarked' tobacco products and that enable law enforcement officials to make seizures without ministry approval all impact on our rights and interests." This is an important fact; I know some people may disagree with this, but this is a reality. "First Nations have used and traded tobacco since time immemorial and never have we alienated ourselves from this inherent and constitutionally protected right. Ontario's attempt at regulating First Nation tobacco is an intrusion of our jurisdiction and in violation of section 35 of the Canadian constitution."

I had to be reminded of that. I'm the First Nations critic for our party, I reside in a riding where there are many Cree and Ojibway members in the communities that I represent, and I had to be reminded that the reality is that tobacco was a form of currency at one time within First Nations; it was a primary trading product. That might run against how we see an economy having to evolve, and we may not like the idea of the trading of tobacco, but it is a reality. First Nations have been trading tobacco for many, many years, and it's been almost like a currency, to a certain extent, when it came to trading.

0940

The point that the chief makes in this letter is that "We've always had, and we always view and shall always view that we have a right to produce tobacco and to sell it." They're okay with the idea of finding some regulatory authority about how you distribute the legal product within our society, and I think that's what they want to talk about. But if you come at it strictly from the punitive side, we don't like that, for the reasons I said up front as far as punitive is not as effective as being proactive at the front. The other part is, it runs against the rights under the Constitution, afforded them under section 35.

What I believe the chief is saying here, and I think it's a good point, is that they understand that the government's got a problem. They understand that society's got

a problem. They understand that something has to be done. But they're saying your approach is the wrong one, and they're saying, "Please come back and talk to us so that we can talk about how we move forward, so that we're able to get the stated goal"—and I think there's nobody in this House that disagrees. I, as a New Democrat, as the member for Timmins—James Bay, as a father and a grandfather, understand and support ways of being able to promote people and be proactive so that they don't use tobacco, something that is bad for the health, and that we need to find some way of dealing with that in a more proactive way.

Strictly saying that we're going to go out and we're going to fine people for the sale of illegal tobacco—which is actually a legal product, which is kind of funny—it seems to me that we're really not dealing with the issue, because at the end of the day, people will buy it. If they can't make it as contraband, they'll pay the higher price, so let's not kid ourselves. What we need to do is come at it from the other side, and I think that's the point that he makes.

He goes on to say: "I understand that the legislation attempts to capture the interests of First Nations in section 25, which enables the province to enter into agreements with bands for the purpose of administering the Tobacco Tax Act. This provision, however, only serves to facilitate the introduction of provincial regulation onto reserves through band consent and administration. It does not acknowledge the authority of First Nations to create their own regulations."

I want to remind the government that in 2003, when they were elected, or shortly after, they talked about—and I applauded, along with Howard Hampton, our then leader, and other leaders in northern Ontario, this government for saying that they wanted to have a new relationship with First Nations; that they wanted to do away with the relationship that has existed in this province, that has existed in other provinces and has existed in this nation for years when it comes to dealing with First Nations so that we really do deal with First Nations on a government-to-government basis, have mutual respect and understanding of each other's position and find ways to talk through how we work our way through the many issues that we have to deal with, for the First Nations, in this case, and sometimes, yes, for ourselves. The government made that announcement.

I was quite heartened, quite frankly, when the announcement was made because it looked back at the date when Bob Rae signed the Statement of Political Relationship with First Nations. I've always believed that we need to try to find a way to be able to work together so that we can find solutions to the many problems that face First Nations. But when we see the government, time and time again—in Bill 191, the Far North planning act, and Bill 151, the new pricing system for forestry products. When we look at all kinds of initiatives that this government has had, it has flown in the face of that new relationship that the government says it wants to have.

What the chief is saying in this letter is, what you're essentially doing is returning to a form of colonialism by



basically saying, "We will impose on you what our solution is, and we're not going to have the dialogue with you in order to find how we can both, First Nations and non-First Nations, get to the same end result"—which is, yes, trying to find a way to keep tobacco away from the reach of children and others.

He goes on to say: "The legislation is also mute on the point of provincial acceptance of federally licensed tobacco products." This is important; this is very important, and I repeat this: "The legislation is also mute on the point of provincial acceptance of federally licensed tobacco products." What he's saying there is, the tobacco products that they produce are licensed under the federal government. So here you've got the bands dealing with law as established by our federal Parliament, and the province is going in and basically trying to change the rules of the process without consultation with the federal or First Nations levels of government; just doing it on their own. He's basically saying, "We're doing what we're asked to do under the law, and now you're changing the game and you're not even talking to us or the federal government about how that game should be changed." I think that's an important point.

"As a result," he goes on to say, "the bill does little to advance the current impasse presented by Ontario's unilateral imposition of its own regulations"—and this is the point that I made earlier. "Since the economic livelihood of many First Nation families is currently tied to the tobacco industry, it is of the utmost importance that legislation of this kind protects the inherent rights and interests of First Nations while respecting previously established regulatory authorities."

So the first part of what he says is, "We're working under the laws established by the federal government. If you want to change the game, it's incumbent upon the province to bring the three parties together—the feds, the First Nations and the province—to come to some sort of accommodation about how this is to be done."

If you're going to say as a province, "We want you out of the tobacco business"—because, essentially, that's what this legislation is doing, I believe—then it's incumbent upon the province to try to find a way to stimulate some other type of economic activity at the very least within those First Nations so that people can go on to another way to make a living. You've got to be clear. You've got to say, "We accept that you are in a legal business. Tobacco is not a contraband product. We want to find a way with you to license your product so that we're able to deal with those in the field who are doing it illegally."

It seems to me that you've got one of three choices: You do nothing—and I don't advocate that because I think you need to do something, and two is, you sit down with First Nations and you figure out a way that you can properly license the production and the distribution of tobacco from First Nations into society. Why is it that we have one rule for Rothmans and du Maurier and then we have another set of rules for First Nations? I just ask the question. If Rothmans makes cigarettes, and du Maurier

and Belvedere and Player's etc—I don't remember what all the other makes are—and they basically take a legal product, which is tobacco, and convert it into a cigarette or a cigar, whatever it might be, and then they sell it legally in stores in Ontario, why, all of a sudden, are we saying to First Nations, "You guys are illegal"? Then let's shut down Rothmans and du Maurier.

It seems to me it only stands to reason that if you apply a law, it should be applied equally in the province. If the stated goal that we have is that we want to take tobacco out of our society, then make it illegal for anybody to sell tobacco. But what the First Nations are saying is that, in the case of tobacco, tobacco has been for some communities—and I wouldn't say all; there is a limited amount of communities that make their living from tobacco, but there are some. We either have to find a way to license them properly for the production and distribution of the product or, at the very least, it seems to me that the third choice the government has is to say, "Okay, let's work with you to figure out how we properly prepare people to move to the new economy," whatever that new economy might be.

I know this is not easy. Listen, I don't pretend, to the minister who's listening to this debate today, that it's an easy solution. I recognize that this is a very difficult solution. But if you're true to your principle that you set in 2003, which is wanting to have a new relationship with First Nations, then I think you've got no choice. Otherwise, the new relationship is the same old, same old. It's the same stuff that we've always had, where the provincial or federal government comes in and says, "Oh, my children, the First Nations, we know best, and we're going to tell you how to do things because we know better than you." I just say that to me, that seems like the wrong approach. I think the government was right in 2003 in wanting to have a new relationship and I think you need to prove that you're serious about that new relationship.

He goes on to write, "All levels of government are required to consult with First Nations on matters that may impact on their aboriginal and treaty rights. For this reason, AIAI had been in contact with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to begin identifying solutions to the many issues surrounding First Nation tobacco products." He's telling you in the letter to the minister that he recognizes that something has to be done. "But do it with us," he says. "Don't impose a solution on us." And it goes back to my first point, which is, if you have a new relationship, please demonstrate that you do.

"With this in mind, it is curious that your ministry did not inform First Nations of this initiative until shortly before the tabling of the legislation. Furthermore, I am disturbed by the notion of First Nation input being sought only after the tabling of the legislation."

I spoke to people who were involved in that meeting with the Chiefs of Ontario about a month ago. I do understand that the ministers had a bit of a rough ride in that meeting, because when the First Nations raised this issue with the ministers, First Nations were pretty hard in



saying, "Hang on a second. We need to deal with these issues in a way that accommodates your need as a province and also accommodates our realities as First Nations. You're moving without our consent. You're moving without a discussion. You're moving without doing what needs to be done to live up to this new relationship," and you had a pretty tough go. The ministers of the day then said, "Listen, we're going to set up some meetings so that we can have a chat about this before we table the legislation."

0950

What ends up happening is, the night before the legislation is tabled, they get a phone call saying, "By the way, we're tabling the legislation tomorrow morning." Well, you can imagine, they were not exactly thrilled and excited—our First Nations brothers and sisters—when they heard that, because there is a constitutional guarantee that you must consult and accommodate under the Constitution. The chiefs reminded the ministers at the meeting, prior to the introduction of the legislation. The ministers engaged in, "Yes, we will meet with you and try to work out the problems," and the next thing you know, it's, "By the way, the legislation is coming tomorrow." Well, you can imagine they're not exactly thrilled and excited about what has happened here.

To go on, it says, "As a consequence of this backward process, we now have a limited opportunity within a constrained time frame to broaden the scope of the legislation so that it protects the rights and interests of First Nations. These circumstances are further undermining the relationship between Ontario and First Nations"—to my first point that I made earlier—"one that the Liberal government committed to recognizing through its participation in the Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee." This, again, was something that the government undertook that I thought made some sense. Let's learn from Ipperwash and let's move forward and never repeat those mistakes again. What they're essentially saying is that you're forgetting the commitments you made, not only under the new relationship pledge but also under the priorities and action committee of the Ipperwash inquiry.

He closes by saying, "I therefore request that you remove Bill 186 from the consideration of the Legislative Assembly until proper consultations and negotiations between Ontario and First Nations have taken place and a win-win solution is reflected in this legislation."

It's pretty clear: You don't have the support of the First Nations. I recognize it would be a difficult thing to try to figure out how we make this happen. I recognize that. If I was the minister, I would recognize that there's some work to be done to get to an agreement. I don't pretend that it's going to be easy for the provincial government.

I just want to end on this point: You have made a pledge and a commitment to First Nations, and that is, that you are going to have a new relationship. When you see examples like this, where the government is not living up to that relationship, I think it drives First Nations

further and further away, and that is not something that serves the interests of Ontario, our citizens and our country in the way that it should.

I ask the government to take into consideration what has been said, not only by myself, but what has been said by the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. I think you need to live up to your commitment and to do what you said you would do, and that is to have this new relationship with First Nations that they so much want.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments relative to the comments of the member for Timmins—James Bay?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I found the member's comments very helpful and edifying. I just want to remind people what it is that the legislation is there to do. It's there to prevent youth from starting to smoke. It's there to enhance smoking cessation resources and supports. The member touched upon one aspect of the legislation's objectives of reducing the availability of cheap and illegal tobacco.

The member made some good points regarding Ontario's relationships with First Nations, and I need to bring the member back to this focus on the other two parts: preventing youth from starting to smoke, enhancing smoking cessation resources and supports, and the part that he discussed, reducing the availability of cheap and illegal tobacco.

It's an issue that requires the support of, not merely our partners in First Nations, but also the federal government, the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba—our neighbouring jurisdictions—and the bordering US states. The member knows as much as we do that illegal tobacco hurts our communities and threatens more than a decade of success in Ontario's fight to control tobacco and to reduce its consumption. This is a whole new initiative, if you will, where traditional sources of tobacco have actually seen their share of the market decline, and this cheap and illicit tobacco, as said, rather than be part of the solution, the purveyors of it—and I'm not suggesting that the First Nations are the sole purveyors of it, but those who are involved in the production, the distribution and the sale of illegal smokes—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Am I out of time?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You are. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a pleasure to enter into debate with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay. I often enjoy his interventions in debate because he will often bring the experiences his constituents have on a particular bill to this floor. He is also a great champion of natives in our province and of the north, and I appreciate that. He raises some very valid points.

I believe that the big challenge that we have with this legislation on this side of the House—and as I've mentioned in my leadoff, we will be supporting it because some of these efforts need to be done. We just feel in the official opposition that more ought to have been done



earlier, and that's why there's an awful lot of room for criticism of this government through its eight years of allowing the illegal contraband tobacco trade to continue, which has forced illegal and contraband cigarettes into the hands of Ontario's youth. It has also reduced revenues by anywhere between \$500 million and \$1 billion annually as a result of their lack of enforcement.

I think in this whole debate, the most poignant quote came through my colleague from Thornhill about a year ago, and it came from Police Chief Bill Blair from Toronto, who said—and I paraphrase, because I don't have the quote in front of me—that because they've allowed the illegal contraband tobacco/drug trade to occur, a lot of that money is going towards guns on our streets. The reality is that there is a huge underground economy and there is a huge linkage with organized crime that could have been dealt with eight years ago, and on the eve of this Parliament rising, we're now dealing with it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Parkdale–High Park for questions and comments.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's always engaging to listen to the member from Timmins–James Bay. He knows his stuff. What we didn't hear from the government side in response was an answer to his fundamental question, which is, why did this government not consult with First Nations before they moved ahead with a bill that clearly had to do with First Nations and First Nations constitutional rights? We haven't heard a word on that from the government side.

Listen, if the government wanted to just punish those who purvey cigarettes, this bill doesn't do it very well, it doesn't have many teeth, and the OPP themselves have said they're stretched already just enforcing the laws that are already on the books. So it doesn't punish well, and it certainly—in contrast to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—does not help kids not start smoking. It doesn't do anything in the prevention field. This bill does neither well.

In fact, what it has done, and the only thing it has done well, is to insult First Nations, insult their constitutional rights and refuse to engage with them in any kind of meaningful consultation. Yet again, we've seen other examples of that in this House. The member from Timmins–James Bay has stood on many occasions on behalf of First Nations and talked about their rights and the fact that this government, really, despite their promises in 2003, have not followed through on that portfolio.

So I'm looking forward to his summation, but it would be very interesting, I would think, if in further debate the government would actually answer the challenge that the member from Timmins–James Bay brought before us; that is, why did this government not consult with First Nations about a project that has been part of really their métier since the beginning of time in this country? That I wait for.

1000

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I'm very pleased to comment on this bill. First of all, the bill has two objectives, really: to prevent youth from starting smoking; and, secondly, to stop contraband cigarette distribution.

Our government is taking action to increase oversight of the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province and to permit police to seize illegal tobacco found in plain view. I was shocked just lately when I walked into a long-term-care facility and saw a man walk in with a bag of 250 cigarettes and sell those cigarettes to the people—I would call them patients—the residents of this long-term-care facility.

Besides this, I remember being on a standing committee way back after I got elected the first time in 1995—we used to call it the Ombudsman standing committee. At the time, the Ombudsman was Mrs. Jamieson. Mrs. Jamieson came to the committee and recommended to the government of the time that we should look seriously at giving or authorizing a licence to a First Nation to manufacture cigarettes. That was turned down. Probably, it was a mistake at the time. If we had done it, we probably would have proper control on these illegal or contraband cigarettes.

Let me tell you, going back last year, we found out in an article in the paper that they even found animal skin in the tobacco of cigarettes that came from Asian countries. Really, we want better control over this, and that's exactly what our government is—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member from Timmins–James Bay, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My, my, my, where do I start? Sometimes it gets a bit frustrating in this place. I think we're all trying to do the right thing. I don't give a darn if you're a Liberal, New Democrat or Conservative; we all come at it from a bit of a different perspective, but we try to do the right thing. Unfortunately, because of the way this Parliament, over the years—the power has run from this very chamber to the corner office of the Premier. I don't mean just Dalton McGuinty, but it's gone on for far too long. This place becomes less relevant, because we don't learn from the debates, we don't learn from each other to the degree that we need to.

I was very cautious in my comments about this particular bill. I said at the very beginning that I understand what the government is trying to do. If I was the minister, I would be trying to find a solution as well because there's some very real problems that have to be dealt with. But essentially, there are two things that I was trying to say, and unfortunately, it doesn't seem as if much of it is going to be taken heed of. And that is, if we want to deal with the use of contraband tobacco, let's do so, but let's do so with a strategy that involves the First Nations, because, yes, they are part of the source. They're not the only, and I argue they're not even the major source, but they are part of the source, and we need to find some way of dealing with that. What I suggested was that you had three approaches: Do nothing, which I don't favour; try to find a way to fix regulation so that it achieves the objective that we all want and, at the same



time, respects that right of First Nations under the Constitution and lives up to the commitment of the government; and/or find something else for these people to do. That's the other option, and that's very difficult, I understand.

But the other part was that there's no emphasis on the promotion side. We can make this stuff as illegal as you want, and you can lock people in jail, but at the end of the day, people will still buy contraband tobacco. Why? Because it's cheaper, and that's what drives people to buy it. So we need to find other solutions to this problem as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham. I don't know why I had a block against that; I apologize.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's a very beautiful and wonderful riding, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly is a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act.

Certainly, the war against tobacco is something that I've been involved in for at least 25 years. In my former capacity as the medical officer of health for York region, I had the opportunity to observe, in fact, both previous governments and the actions that they took in this regard.

But I'd like to actually go back even further. Our colleague from Timmins–James Bay did allude to the groundbreaking work that was first done by the US Surgeon General Luther Terry in 1964 with his report on smoking and health, where gradually the awareness of the harms not only of tobacco use but also of second-hand smoke were brought to the fore in North America.

It was remarkable that US Surgeon General Everett Koop released, first in 1982, a whole series of reports related to smoking and health—literally, in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1988. He showed not only that smoking caused more deaths from heart disease than from cancer but also that smoking was the major cause of illness and death from chronic obstructive lung disease in the United States. He also mentioned very specifically that nicotine was a highly addictive substance, even likening it to cocaine and heroin addiction. We've heard in the House, over the course of the debate on this bill, many stories about family members or individual members here who have struggled with this highly addictive substance.

This is why legislation in this regard is not easy. You're dealing with scientific evidence. You're dealing with, perhaps, very powerful lobby groups. You're dealing with a substance that people like. So it's not in the least surprising, in fact, that legislation to control tobacco has taken us so long. I see Bill 186 as an excellent additional, incremental step in this war against tobacco use, and essentially, I truly believe that this should be a non-partisan issue. I'm very optimistic that all parties will see fit to vote in favour of this legislation. It certainly deserves that consideration, and we have heard some positive remarks in that regard.

I do want to acknowledge, going back to when I was first the medical officer of health in York region in 1988, on the health committee, that the regional councillors on that committee all smoked. As a new and enthusiastic medical officer of health, I did bring to the attention of

the regional chairman that I felt this was entirely inappropriate in view of the literature, the science, that was known at the time. I'm happy to say: January 1, 1989, the health committee of York Regional council was smoke-free.

However, we knew that we had to do far more than simply make some symbolic changes like that. I was extremely involved in the early 1990s as president of the public health association at that time and came to this Legislature and spoke at committee in favour of the NDP government's legislation, the 1994 Tobacco Control Act. It was far-reaching. It prohibited selling or supplying tobacco to anyone under the age of 19. Vendors were responsible for ensuring that customers were of legal age by requiring photo identification. There was a requirement to post age restrictions, health warnings etc. In fact, the emphasis was very much on education.

After the passage of the Tobacco Control Act, local public health units were charged with enforcing the legislation. Certainly in York region, we took the approach that with education we would see real societal change. I remember that at that committee hearing we urged the province at that time—we, the health professionals that appeared—to go even further. However, in the judgment of the government of the day, we felt that, fundamentally, it was over to municipalities to pass bylaws to regulate smoking in their own jurisdictions.

In York region, it took us some six years to get a regional bylaw. The region of York is composed of some nine area municipalities, and we had to obtain a triple majority in order to pass a region-wide bylaw. What that meant was that we needed at least five municipalities to agree to the bylaw, those five municipalities had to make up a majority of the population of York region, and then we had to have a majority on regional council to have a region-wide bylaw.

1010

I'm actually delighted because my assistant in that struggle in York region was an individual named Soo Wong. She's a public health nurse; lately, a Toronto school board trustee. She was my right-hand woman to go and educate area municipalities and all the stakeholders—the restaurants, the bars and so on—in York region in order to pass our regional bylaw. I was so delighted last Saturday, May 7, to be at the nomination of Soo Wong as our Liberal candidate in the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. I know that should she be successful on October 6, she will bring great expertise in this particular area given her great experience with York region public health.

Having passed our municipal bylaw in York region, what we of course discovered was that there were issues around boundaries, certainly for York region. The city of Toronto had a somewhat different bylaw; the same with Durham region and Peel. We started approaching the then government to say that clearly there was a need for province-wide legislation. I must say that in the late 1990s we felt—and I'm rather surprised by the Conservative caucus members who stood up and urged us to do



more. They had every opportunity during the Harris-Eves years to do far more in terms of moving towards province-wide legislation. I will mention, however, that the minister of the day, Elizabeth Witmer, did make some forward progress. She did convene an expert panel in 1999. It was composed of tobacco control decision-makers and they consulted with experts across Canada and the United States to, in fact, look at a renewal of the Ontario tobacco strategy and look at best practices, especially from the US Centers for Disease Control. But in terms of actual forward movement, there was very little during those years.

I'm happy to say that when the McGuinty government took office in 2003, those of us who were still in the field renewed our pressure for province-wide legislation. I was certainly delighted, in 2005, to know that the Smoke-Free Ontario Act's passage would do a great deal in this ongoing war, yet another very positive step forward. The creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion also shows that our government has placed a very high premium on the value of health promotion programs, education and gradual societal change.

Now, coming to the issue of contraband—of course, this issue is not new at all. In the early 1990s there was a major issue. Tobacco taxes were actually reduced by the federal government and the effect of the deliberations over where tobacco taxes should go—they were quite high—meant that contraband was very much in evidence in Ontario. Some of the statistics, though, recently have become very alarming, so that over the last few years the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit has released a special report. They released this January 2005—actually, they released it in June 2006. They were looking at statistics over some 18 months, from 2005 to 2006. Their finding was that some 37% of Ontario smokers purchased cigarettes on reserve, with 26% saying they had done so in the past six months. The Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council also released a study that concluded that contraband in Canada is increasing and their statistics showed that some 22% of cigarettes smoked in Canada were illegal and that that had increased from some 16.5% in 2006.

Of course, their point was also that government was losing some \$1.6 billion per year in tax revenues, and in Ontario, that amount was estimated at some \$449 million.

It was also noted that the primary sources of contraband were on First Nation reserves in the St. Lawrence basin.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being 10:15, pursuant to standing order 8, this House will be in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I just wanted to wish my dad a happy birthday. He turns 72 today.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to introduce, from Kitchener-Waterloo Counselling Services, the executive director, Leslie Josling; president of the board, Wayne Hobbs; and a director, Liz Watson-Palermo, here today for family services day. I know that Dr. Sue Horton is here as well. Congratulations.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to introduce four people from my riding who are here from the beautiful town of Bobcaygeon. They're here in the west members' gallery: Jim and Carol Young, and Lorna and Andy Harris.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm very pleased to be able to introduce members of Family Services York Region: Elisha Laker, the executive director; Mariana Benitez, the clinical director; and Susan Warren, manager of Families and Schools Together, group and cultural support services. Please help me welcome them to the Legislature.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to welcome Mr. Raymond Boyer, executive director of the Sudbury Counseling Centre, who is here for family services day today. He does great work in the community, and I'm happy to have him here with us in the Legislature today.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I'd like to introduce two people from my riding: Deborah Lavender from Halton Family Services, and Susan Jewett from Burlington Counselling and Family Services. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They're here even from Timmins—James Bay. We have Richard Lambert-Bélanger, who is the executive director of the Timmins unit, and we also have Garry Dent from the community of Kapuskasing.

**Ms. Helena Jacek:** Joining us in the west members' gallery are page Melanie Soltau's parents, Tony and Karen, and it looks like grandmother Gloria Richards has decided to join them as well.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to introduce a couple of individuals from my riding. First, with the Ontario Community Support Association, Patti Lennox is here. She is the supervisor of caregiver support services at Community and Primary Health Care.

I'd also like to introduce Allan Hogan, who's the executive director of Family and Children's Services of Leeds and Grenville. He's here for Family Service Ontario day.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's a great day in the Legislature today. There are several people from London. First, I'd like to introduce Bev Noble and Sandra Savage. They're with Family Service Thames Valley.

I'd also like to introduce Brian Dunne from Participation House, who's here for Ontario Community Support Association day.

And I'd like to introduce Diego Ortiz, a constituent of mine from London North Centre.

Welcome, all.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Steve Rudback to Queen's Park today. He's the father of page Allison Rudback, and he's here to watch his daughter in action today. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Rudback.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Jon Thompson, executive

director of Riverside Community Counselling Services in Fort Frances. He too is here as part of the family services day. Welcome.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I have a number of guests today as well. Alan McQuarrie is the executive director of the Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing, and he's here with board member Derek Thompson. They're way up there, and we welcome them.

I also want to welcome today my good friends Jason and Nancy Corbett. Many of my colleagues will know Jason. He was my constituency assistant for many years. They're here today to enjoy the Legislature. Welcome, Jason and Nancy.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'd like to welcome Sue Stinson from Peterborough, who is here with the Ontario Community Support Association; and also, Kelsey Ingram, who is the daughter of His Honour Judge Alan Ingram and Dr. Jenny Ingram, from Peterborough.

**Mr. David Caplan:** Two wonderful volunteers from Don Valley East are here: Diana Dong and Jane Wu. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I would like to introduce the grade 12 class from Stephen Lewis Secondary School in my riding of Mississauga—Erindale. Together with their teachers Ryan Harper and Michelle Smith, they are seated in the west gallery. I want to welcome them to question period and to the Legislature as well.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'd like to introduce some guests from Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin: Executive Director Mark Creedon; Acting Board President Jim Leising; board member Ehsan Khandaker; and from the Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin mentorship sistering program: Theresa Koutzodimos, Margaret Czach, Valerie Anderson, Parveen Sodhi and Lama Osman. They're here for family services day at Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to introduce Heather Bebb, the executive director of the Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County. She's in the gallery up above.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to welcome in the members' east gallery from the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre, here for family services day, Nancy Chamberlain, the executive director of the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre; Abi Sprakes, the manager of clinical services; Darlene Niemi, a board member from Children's Centre Thunder Bay—a great example of partnership between agencies in the community of Thunder Bay; and Connie McLeod, a past board member of the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre who is now a board member of Family Service Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd like to introduce April Zheng, mother of the great page Viktor Zhou, who's here with us in the gallery today.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today, and ask the members to do so, regional councillor Bruce Timms from St. Catharines.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm delighted to see my friend the executive director of Stratford family services, Susan Melkert, here today. Welcome.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'd like to introduce to you today the family services groups that are here in the House for family services day. I would like to welcome them, especially John Ellis, the executive director, and Alex MacDougall, the board president.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'd like to welcome as well Patricia Hollingsworth, the executive director of the Northumberland Community Counselling Centre. She does a great job, along with her whole team.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Like my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, I want to welcome members from the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre. But I also want to introduce Carol Cline from the Catholic Family Development Centre in Thunder Bay as well. Welcome, Caroline.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to introduce Vivi Dong from Norstar Times, a major Chinese publication in the Scarborough area, who is visiting with us today.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I am absolutely delighted to introduce to the Legislature distinguished members from the government of Cuba. They are Her Excellency, Madam Carmelina Ramirez Rodriguez; the consul general, Jorge Soberón; and the minister counsellor of the Republic of Cuba, Antonio Rodriguez Valcarcel. Welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome, Ambassador—it's nice to see you again—and Consul General. It's a pleasure to have you here today.

On behalf of page Hamza Naim and the member from Ajax—Pickering, we'd like to welcome his mother, Sylvia Naim, and his father, Mohammed Naim, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery for family service day here at Queen's Park, I'd like to welcome Sandra Savage, Bev Noble, Alex Connoy and Martha Connoy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the press gallery this morning, I'd like to welcome the press gallery summer intern, Chris Herhalt. Chris will be working with the Queen's Park press gallery until September. He will then be returning to Carleton University to complete his studies in journalism. Welcome to Queen's Park, Chris.

With all the introductions today, anybody who was not formally introduced, welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, I laid out a PC plan to help give families relief from skyrocketing hydro bills by ending your sweetheart Samsung deal—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. That took a grand total of 18 seconds for interjections, and—



*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of the Environment. Member from Sault Ste. Marie. Member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Ontario PCs will end your sweetheart Samsung deal and the massive subsidies through your FIT program to give Ontario families the break they need.

Later on this afternoon, we'll continue our efforts to give average families a break with our motion to call on the McGuinty Liberals to stop raising taxes on Ontario families. I know you're addicted to tax increases. I know that's the path that the McGuinty Liberals want to go down. Our motion calls on you to stop your tax increases.

Will you just be direct? Minister, is your plan to increase the HST, to bring in a carbon tax, the eco taxes, or all of the above?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The official opposition introduced a job-killing policy yesterday—a job-killing policy that will undermine the development of a new sector in this economy and that will undermine the development of a range of communities, from Windsor through to Ottawa.

Let me give you some of the reaction to your announcement yesterday. Here's what a fellow named Paco Caudet, the general manager of Siliken Group, a Spanish manufacturer of solar panels, said: "We would have no more basis to operate here"—I'm sorry; it was Klaus Dohring, the president of Green Sun Rising. "It would have a devastating effect (on the sector)."

I will give more quotes to the Leader of the Opposition. We will stop you and your job-killing plan. We're prepared to stand up for Ontarians. New jobs, a greener economy and a healthier economic future for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** On October 6, the Ontario PCs will stand up for Ontario families and end this job-killing government that has chased 300,000 manufacturing jobs from our province.

There are two things that you're guaranteed from the McGuinty Liberals: one, hydro bills will go through the roof; and, two, you will raise taxes once again.

We're simply asking you, Minister, wouldn't it be a bit more honest just to say right now what your plan is? Are you going to increase the HST by one point, or is it two? Are you going to bring in a carbon tax? Are you going to bring in the eco tax, or all three of the above? We remember Premier McGuinty swearing he wouldn't raise taxes. He has done it over and over again.

Minister, are you really going to go for the hat trick and increase the HST once again?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Under the next McGuinty government, there will be no carbon tax and there will be no increase in the HST.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Halton. The Minister of Education. The member from Burlington. The member from Oxford. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The member from Sarnia–Lambton. The member from Nepean. The member from Oxford. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We won't allow that party to kill more jobs in Ontario. We will stop you in your tracks. We're going to speak up for Ontario farmers. You want to take away their feed-in-tariff contracts.

The Leader of the Opposition didn't tell the full story. The feed-in tariff is important to develop a new industry, cleaner energy and new jobs in rural and urban Ontario. That leader and his party will kill them. The people of Ontario will stop you dead in your tracks.

We're going to stand up for new, clean jobs with the tax regime we have today that will build a better future for our children and for our province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** So now we've seen the Liberal campaign slogan: "The McGuinty Liberals won't raise your taxes. This time, we really mean it." Minister, come on. We've seen this movie before. In 2003, Premier McGuinty said, "I won't increase taxes." He nailed families with the so-called health tax. In 2007, he said, "This time I won't raise your taxes; I mean it." He hit us with the greedy HST tax grab.

Minister, people are on to you. Won't you admit it today: Your plan is to increase the HST and hit Ontario families once again?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Boy, the wisdom from pages. We just had an interesting discussion—the observations of pages.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** People are on to the Leader of the Opposition. They know now that he will kill jobs in favour of opening the market to competition. What happened last time they did that? Prices spiked 40%. Then they had to cap them. They know that you want to close hospitals, lay off nurses, fire teachers and undermine the gains we've made in health care and education that benefit this economy.

We have an economy that's growing again. We have recovered the jobs that were lost in the downturn and more. We will continue to build a new clean renewable energy sector in Ontario that benefits our farmers, that benefits our cities, that benefits our children and that builds a better future for all Ontarians.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Deputy Premier: Our motion later today calls on the McGuinty Liberals to stop raising taxes on Ontario families who have been hit many times by Liberal tax increases before. They're hit by \$1.41 gasoline, where your HST is costing them 10 cents more a litre. The McGuinty Liberals' response? Well,

they scrambled and cobbled together their own motion that says that the McGuinty Liberals won't raise taxes; they won't cut them either. That sounds familiar. We remember that story from 2003, when you signed the Taxpayer Protection Act, and then, once you had the keys to the Premier's office, you ripped up your promise to Ontario families and jacked up taxes.

Deputy Premier, Ontario families won't be fooled again. They want change. They—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition is simply manufacturing this to fill the void in what he hasn't said. He hasn't said he's going to cut the HST, but we think he is, and he's going to take \$3 billion out of health care. He has now confirmed that he's going to kill the green energy sector, a growing sector that will help clean up our environment, that will give us better power and a better future. He said that.

They said before they wouldn't close hospitals, and they closed 18 hospitals when given the chance. We're building new hospitals, we're hiring nurses, and we're hiring teachers. We're creating full-day learning; we know they're going to cancel that.

This is all about a better future for Ontario. We've laid out a plan. It's clear and consistent. Their secret agenda will undermine the growth of this province and lead, in our view, to a return to the dark days of Harris economics in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary  
1050

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** There are two things guaranteed from McGuinty Liberals: You'll increase hydro rates, and you'll raise taxes on families once again.

The Ontario PCs will stand up for hard-working families. We'll give them relief on the skyrocketing hydro bills and we will cut taxes across the board to give families relief and the chance to catch up. To date, Minister, you took \$3 billion from the so-called health tax. You took \$3 billion from your HST tax grab. You took \$1 billion by turning the debt retirement charge into a permanent tax grab, but you still have a \$17-billion deficit. My question is simple: How many points do you have to increase the HST to pay off your \$17-billion deficit?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition yesterday gave us a preview of what Ontario will look like. He's going to kill 16,000 direct and indirect jobs in the green energy sector. He is going to cut money from health care; he's going to cut \$3 billion from health care. He is going to shut down full-day learning in kindergarten and junior kindergarten. He is going to do what Mike Harris did to municipalities, downloading costs to municipalities, which represented a huge tax increase to all ratepayers. Ontarians have seen that movie. They will reject it—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe North will withdraw the comment that he directed to the minister.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm not sure what I said to the minister.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I withdraw the comment, whatever it was.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No. Just an unequivocal withdrawal.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Withdraw.

**Interjection:** I didn't say anything.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You did say something.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Perhaps the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound may want to lobby his leader for a question.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I wish they'd withdraw what they said yesterday, that they're going to kill jobs in Ontario. We're going to continue to lower taxes, which we've done. We're going to continue to build a clean, green renewable sector—better environment, better health care, better education and a better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's a simple matter of arithmetic: Either our spending must be restrained to meet our revenues or our taxes must be raised to pay for all the McGuinty Liberal spending. The McGuinty Liberals won't tell you what they'll do, but we all know: McGuinty Liberals will raise taxes. It's what you always do. You can't help it.

The Ontario PCs will not. We will cut taxes across the board, give families a break they deserve. Why are you bound and determined to increase taxes on the backs of Ontario families? You've already killed 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. It's time for change that will give families the relief they deserve.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** When we cut income taxes for Ontario's families, he voted against it. When we lowered the business rates for small businesses, he voted against it. When we created the Ontario clean energy benefit to reduce energy prices by 10% for all Ontarians, he voted against it.

He has now confirmed that they will cut nurses from our hospitals. If you're a nurse in this province, watch out for that party. If you're a teacher in this province, watch out for that party. If you're a student in school, anywhere from junior kindergarten to post-secondary, watch out for that party, because they're coming after you. They're coming after your future.

We're going to fight them and we're going to beat them on October 6.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sergeant-at-Arms, can you confirm that there is a defibrillator outside the door, please? I'm a little concerned about the energy coming out of some members today.



I would just remind members on both sides—and actually this is not even directed to the third party, but it's directed to the government and the loyal opposition—that we have a number of guests here. We have a group of students up here, probably grade 10 civics students, who we are trying to ensure receive a good education in this province, an education that demonstrates respect for different opinions, allowing somebody to speak and listening to an answer. I would just remind everyone of the example that we're trying to instill in them. What's happening in here is not useful for our future leaders.

New question.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Last year, New Democrats requested information relating to the government's unfair HST. In January 2010, the freedom-of-information coordinator recommended that the government release information immediately. Can the Acting Premier explain why this request was delayed until May 2010?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm proud of our record of compliance with freedom of information, which is higher than any other previous government. The information she has referenced has been released, and I look forward to continuing to work under the auspices of that particular act and the regulations that ensure true, better, more transparent government for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On January 19, 2010, the staff responsible for the freedom-of-information act wrote an email to the finance minister's political staff recommending that two documents related to our freedom-of-information request be mailed the following day. In response, a member of the minister's political staff emailed, "Please phone me before this." The documents were then delayed for four months, conveniently close to the end of that session. If this wasn't another case of political interference, what was it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was an email, and I remind the leader of the third party that all the information requested has been released in accordance with the act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, in January of last year, the civil service recommended that information about the HST be sent out that day. Political staff in the minister's office intervened, and the information went into limbo for four whole months. Will the Acting Premier disclose what was discussed in the phone call that resulted in that delay?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** "Limbo" is not in the Ministry of Finance. I'm not privy to what was in that phone conversation. It may have been in fact to make sure the information was being released. I don't know the answer to that.

What I know is this: All the information requested has been released, it's in public hands, it's been subject to

questions here and subject to debate across the province, and we look forward to that kind of transparency and accountability moving forward.

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** To the Acting Premier: This morning, gas prices are averaging \$1.37 a litre across Ontario and are approaching \$1.50 a litre in northern communities like Wawa and Marathon. Many people just don't know how they're going to cope with these rising prices. Why is this government cutting corporate taxes for banks and oil companies that make millions speculating on gas prices while drivers are being asked to pay more and more and more?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, the leader is right: This phenomenon that is happening around the world is seeing gas prices—I saw last night that here in Toronto it went up to \$1.416 at a couple of service stations downtown. I believe they are in fact at \$1.50 and higher in some northern communities, which we think is very problematic for families and for our whole economy.

The challenge for all governments is to determine what steps are appropriate to deal with this, what steps will in fact help consumers, help the economy. Those are complicated questions; they're complicated by who has jurisdiction. For instance, anti-combines legislation is the jurisdiction of the federal government. It's further complicated by a range of other issues related to the tax system. I look forward to a further discussion with the leader after her supplementary.

1100

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People are looking for any help that they can get, but the McGuinty Liberals have different priorities. The mom who has to drop the kids off at child care and then drive to work isn't getting any help at all. There's no plan to confront gas price gouging. In fact, there is a new tax on the cost of filling up. But the McGuinty Liberals are offering some relief to the corporations making record profits off the high prices of gasoline. When will this government start actually putting the people of this province first?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, those tax policies have helped businesses that are being negatively impacted by the price of gasoline. Does she not think, for instance, that our auto manufacturers have to ship product both into the plant and out of the plant? She's taking what I would call a very short-term view of this thing and, frankly, not really dealing with the problem.

A couple of issues: first, we would call on the federal government to exercise its power under the anti-combines act to look at collusive pricing among oil companies. That is one thing that could happen. The federal government also has some \$300 million in special tax cuts for the oil industry. The Prime Minister has said he'll get rid of them by 2015. Ontario says, "Get rid of them today." That's what we ought to be doing, that's where a difference can be made, and we would support those moves immediately.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's this Liberal government that is not doing anything to deal with the problem. The McGuinty Liberals refuse to even discuss a plan to confront gas price gouging. They don't want to make things better. Then they brought in the HST, which actually made things even worse. Now, I know this government doesn't care about helping people who are paying more at the pumps every day, but are they willing to reconsider their corporate tax giveaways to businesses making a fortune from those very gas prices?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We want to help the forestry sector in northern Ontario get back on its feet. They have to buy gasoline and other oil products. We want to continue to build that northern economy. We want to help small businesses. That's why we cut the small business rate by 17% to help them at a time when the dollar is going up and the price of oil is going up.

With respect to consumers, we now have the lowest tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income, which that member voted against. We have the most generous sales tax credits in Canada on the HST.

Those are the right moves. Now it's up to the federal government to exercise its proper authority under anti-combines legislation and get rid of the special tax cuts for oil companies in the country.

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Ontario PC leader understands that families are squeezed by all of Premier McGuinty's increases to skyrocketing hydro bills. It's why he announced yesterday that an Ontario PC government will give families relief from paying a \$7-billion tab for a sweetheart Samsung deal you're adding to hydro bills. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch he thinks Ontario families can afford to pay, so you mocked the relief that we would provide Ontario families. It backfired badly when you didn't even know the details of the \$7-billion sweetheart deal that you signed. Did you only get a blacked-out copy of the deal as well?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Interesting question. I want to share a quote from the Tillsonburg News with the member opposite. This is what it said: It said that Siemens is currently in the process of hiring around 300 permanent employees for their blade plant. It said that renovations at the plant are currently under way, creating 600 additional construction jobs. Let me quote directly from the article as it refers to a comment made by the member for Oxford: "Hardeman said the province's deal with Samsung and Siemens could survive under a Tory government...."

That stands in stark contrast to the very comments that the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday. I think workers—the thousands of workers that your plan is going to put out of work across this province—deserve to know: Who is calling the shots over there? Who is right? Is it the leader—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I would just ask the government members to be respectful of their own minister. Your own minister was up answering a question and you are shouting him down.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I don't think he tried to answer the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You just asked the question. You should be listening very hard for the answer.

*Supplementary?*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** An Ontario PC government will stand up for families and seniors; you stick with a \$7-billion sweetheart deal by adding it to their hydro bills. Premier McGuinty chooses his foreign multinational corporations over Ontario families. He is so out of touch with Ontario families that he thinks they have an unlimited ability to pay for his sweetheart deal. You'll say and do anything to keep—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Start the clock. Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You'll say and do anything to keep Ontario families paying for a \$7-billion sweetheart deal that hasn't produced a single watt of power or the jobs that you promised.

But it turns out you don't understand—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** My apologies. Your minister is sitting right behind you. He needs to hear the question.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Whoever is playing the little trumpet under their breath can cease.

Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But it turns out that you don't understand the deal you signed, or you haven't read it. How could you stick Ontario families with paying a \$7-billion tab for a sweetheart Samsung deal that you haven't even bothered to read?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to share with the member opposite what the mayor of Windsor thinks about the announcement of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday: "We all know in this region that the Green Energy Act gave birth to the renewable energy sector in this province, and has created thousands and thousands of jobs. If anybody has any doubts about the jobs being created I would invite them to the city of Windsor and we'll certainly give them a guided tour of the employment lines where people are now finding jobs and opportunities that once did not exist."

My colleagues from Windsor and I would like to cordially invite the member opposite and his leader to Windsor so that he could meet with those workers face to face: the thousands of workers in Windsor who are getting employment through our Green Energy Act and who they want to put out of work. Perhaps they can explain to those workers why they want to put them out of work. Just—



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. The McGuinty government has promised to open 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics by 2011, yet as of today, only eight clinics are funded and operating. That leaves 17 clinics that have been announced but have not been funded.

Nine out of 10 Ontarians face unacceptable primary health care wait times and one in 11 has no access to primary care. Will the minister open the 17 remaining nurse-practitioner-led clinics, clinics that she promised? Will she open them before the next election?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about this very innovative approach in Ontario, the nurse-practitioner-led clinics. What I can tell you is that people from across the country and beyond are looking at this model because they really do believe, as I know the member opposite does, that this is part of what we need to do to improve access to primary health care.

I am delighted that we learned from the pilot in Sudbury and have announced 25 more nurse-practitioner-led clinics that are opening right across this province. I can tell you, last week I was in Essex with the member from Essex to open the newest nurse-practitioner-led clinic. I can tell you that the patients who were there are ecstatic about the care they are receiving, and the professionals who are working there are also—

1110  
**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I take from this that the promise will be filled for eight out of 25 and not filled for 17 out of 25.

The minister knows that there are serious problems accessing primary care in Ontario, and she knows that adequate numbers of nurses working to their full scope of practice is an essential piece of relieving that pressure. Yet today, Ontario has the second-lowest registered-nurse-to-population ratio in all of Canada, and nurse practitioners still do not have open prescribing rights. If we want to address Ontario's problem in primary care, we must strengthen nursing in Ontario.

Minister, will nurse practitioners have open prescribing before October's election?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that our commitment to improving access to primary care is as strong as can be. We have seen tremendous progress: 1.2 million more Ontarians with access to primary care than when we took office. We are now at 94% of Ontarians with access to primary care. It's not as high as we'd like it to be, but we have made tremendous progress, and we're committed to actually continuing with that progress.

We believe that having access to primary care is fundamental to the strength of our health care system, and that's why we have taken the steps we have. I was very pleased yesterday to be part of an announcement: 170 more doctors have chosen Ontario than have left Ontario. We have reversed the brain drain, and that's only—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The Leader of the Opposition has just brazenly criticized the McGuinty government's work in creating jobs through the FIT program and the Green Energy Act. At a time when our province's economy is on the road to successful recovery, the member opposite is promising to kill good Ontario jobs if his party is elected this October. This makes no economic sense.

As a result of the McGuinty government's green energy initiatives, one of the world's largest solar companies decided to locate its solar panel manufacturing plant in my riding, supporting 500 jobs. And I know that many more ridings have got green energy jobs.

Can the minister explain why any party would vow to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to attempt—attempt—to understand the rationale between that opposition leader and his policy released yesterday to gut the Green Energy Act, which is exactly what he announced.

It is extremely disturbing when the number one issue for people is jobs. The number one is, how are we recovering our economy, when his buddy the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, said, "a fragile economic recovery." We need stability. The worst thing that we could see in a business investment climate is instability, which is what the Leader of the Opposition introduced.

It isn't just in Guelph where we see the hundreds of jobs. There are hundreds of jobs in every pocket of Ontario related to the new green industry. It is nonsense. It's just incomprehensible that they would choose this tack to actually kill jobs in Ontario when we need more jobs in Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** There's another element to the Leader of the Opposition's critique of the McGuinty government's FIT and Green Energy Act programs. The member opposite continually promises to provide Ontario families with relief from growing hydro bills. He blames the FIT programs that are creating jobs for these hardships. Would killing programs in a new and growing sector that is providing jobs to my constituents and thousands of other people right across this province bring relief to Ontario families—getting rid of their new jobs?

I would like to ask the minister to inform this House as to why Ontario needs to invest in and support the green energy sector.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I have got to set the record straight. This same Leader of the Opposition suggested those green megawatts or kilowatts—they're not even attached to the grid yet. So how, in fact, are we paying for them and them being embedded in the price? He admits they're not done yet, so it's clearly not affecting the price.

The truth is that even in his own backyard we have the potential of investors. The mayor of Port Colborne was here yesterday telling us that there are two European companies travelling to Port Colborne now that are interested. His own economic development commission has been working with this company to land them here—two of them.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition, what are we to say to these foreign investors? What are we to say when they are coming to the Niagara region for green jobs, jobs that we're fighting for? We're fighting against every other jurisdiction. We have moved mountains to bring these jobs to Ontario and they're coming. That job killer is sending them away—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** To the Minister of Energy: Ontario PCs are listening to families who are looking for a leader and a party that will give them relief—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. I did want the clock stopped, please.

Please continue.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Our leader announced relief for families who pay the tab for your \$7-billion sweetheart deal with Samsung. But McGuinty Liberals are so out of touch they are trying to say that the \$7-billion, sweetheart Samsung deal adds only \$1.60 a year to hydro bills. That's as laughable as saying that your energy experiments will add only 1% to hydro bills or that hydro bills have remained flat year over year.

What makes you think that you can treat Premier McGuinty's increases to hydro bills as if they were the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** If they really cared about families, how could they have put the use of coal up 127% during their time in office? The Leader of the Opposition's announcement yesterday totally scuttles the incredible progress we've made over eight years to replace dirty coal with cleaner sources of power.

Let me share with you, though, how the medical profession feels about this. I want to quote the executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. This is what he said: "The Conservatives' proposal to kill green energy will be a disaster for

human health and the environment. It will mean returning to coal—the world's most climate-destructive fuel—and the thousands of illnesses and hundreds of deaths that coal causes in Ontario each year. Doctors are appalled that Mr. Hudak would embrace such an irresponsible plan."

We share the sentiments of doctors and medical professionals across this province. They're placing the health of ourselves and our kids—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Fairy tales; I ask questions and I get those kinds of answers.

The Premier and this minister are so out of touch that the next thing you know, they'll say that the smart meter tax machines actually save you money. Even Premier McGuinty admitted that the Samsung deal was a large contributor to hydro bills, going up another 46% over the next four years. Ontario families have been squeezed during the recession. An Ontario PC government will stand up for families who pay the bills by using every tool at our disposal to give them relief options. Renewable energy will be part of our energy supply. Why do you insist that renewable energy will only be part of your supply mix if it is too expensive for Ontario families to afford?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Just as we're turning the corner, recovering from the global recession; just as our globe-leading clean energy economy has created 13,000 jobs by the end of last year, and we're well on track to create 50,000 new jobs; just as Ontario's clean energy economy has attracted billions of dollars from the private sector; just as our Samsung initiative is in the process of opening four new manufacturing plants; just as another 30 manufacturing plants have been announced, that Leader of the Opposition this week wants to bring that incredible progress to an end, kill our clean energy economy, kill the thousands of clean energy jobs that we're creating and send a message to the world that Ontario lacks the boldness to compete for private sector investment.

The worst threat to jobs, the worst threat to our health, the worst threat to our future is a reckless Leader of the Opposition with a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Economic Development, if outbursts like that continue, I will have to warn you.

New question.

1120

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. To great fanfare some months ago, you announced what was called the northern growth plan. A lot of people in northern Ontario—municipalities, mayors, aldermen, media



and others—found it quite laughable. Essentially, what you did was to have a plan to make a plan.

Recently we saw in the province of Quebec that a northern growth plan was announced, but specific to that plan was not only a timeline of what they want to do but the associated dollars for making that plan work. Are you planning to do the same in Ontario? Are you going to follow the Quebec lead?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It's great to have an opportunity to speak once again about the excitement surrounding the northern Ontario growth plan release. May I say that I think the member is quite incorrect. There's tremendous support for it, certainly among municipal leaders and the private sector.

In terms of Plan Nord, which was released yesterday, we congratulate the province of Quebec. Certainly, the northern Ontario growth plan stacks up very favourably, in terms of the commitment to investments that we are making in northern Ontario. In fact, let's look at some of the investments that are in place already in terms of northern Ontario resources: \$5.6 billion every year in the mining supply and services sector over a 25-year period if there is no growth—and we expect substantial growth in the mining sector—that's \$125 billion; let alone the northern Ontario heritage fund, a \$100-million fund which we do not see in the province of Quebec. Our investments in highway infrastructure—millions over the last number of years.

We are very excited about the northern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The fact is, you tied no money to the plan that you announced a few months ago. What you've essentially done is developed a plan to make a plan. People in northern Ontario are quite specific: What are you going to do when it comes to the investments that are needed to build the infrastructure necessary to support the communities—both on the physical side, in terms of infrastructure, and the social infrastructure that needs to be dealt with?

We saw the plan come out of the province of Quebec. La province du Quebec said, "We're going to associate some dollars. Here's what they are." They've demonstrated in their plan how much they're prepared to spend over a period of years.

The question to you is, are you prepared to at least follow the lead of Quebec and tie dollars to your plan so that at the end of the day it actually becomes something of value?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** You know, this certainly isn't a competition. We are very pleased about the plan brought forward by the province of Quebec yesterday. The investments that are committed in our growth plan not only compare favourably but are probably substantially more, when one looks at the investments in northern highways—it's very, very true—let alone our commitment in terms of developing the northern policy institute and our multi-modal transportation strategy.

There's no question that, in terms of their plan and ours, we have many, many common goals—which is to

develop our economy in the northern parts of our province. The commitment by the Dalton McGuinty government is a substantial one that is backed up by billions of dollars in infrastructure, which will continue on a commitment we feel very, very strongly about. We are incredibly proud of that and incredibly proud of the investment in the northern Ontario heritage fund in terms of the mining supply and services sector, let alone the mining development in terms of the Ring of Fire that we are committed to as part of our Open Ontario plan—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## FAMILY SERVICES

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Today in the Legislature, we're joined by members of Family Service Ontario. Family Service Ontario represents 46 not-for-profit member agencies that provide community-based mental health services and programs to over 250,000 individuals and families annually. They have agencies throughout Ontario, including my own riding of Essex, that assist individuals with emotional, psychological, social, physical and financial struggles.

Minister, please tell the members of this House how our government is working to support the important work being undertaken each and every day across our province by Family Service Ontario.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I want to thank the member for Essex for his great question, and I'd like to welcome again the members from Family Service Ontario who are with us today in the Legislature.

Family service agencies provide a wide spectrum of services to assist Ontarians of every age group and socioeconomic status. I am proud to say that my ministry's annualized funding to Family Service Ontario has more than tripled since we first came into office in 2003. My ministry also provides violence-against-women funding to 29 agencies that are members of Family Service Ontario. This includes funding for counselling programs, the transitional and housing support program, as well as the early intervention program for children who witness violence. I look forward to our continuing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Family Service Ontario agencies cover a large spectrum of services. FSO agencies offer relationship and financial counselling, programs to assist substance abuse, as well as services for people with disabilities.

As you mentioned, Minister, Family Service Ontario also plays an important role in helping individuals who are victims of domestic violence, but they also have a role in providing counselling to individuals who are offenders.

Minister, please tell this Legislature what our government's role is in the partnership with Family Service Ontario in providing these important services to Ontarians.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** My colleague from Essex makes a very important point. It really is a partnership, a relationship between services that the family services provide throughout the province of Ontario and the government.

I'll give you a couple of examples. A family might be in crisis because of domestic violence, so the partner assault response program, funded by the government of Ontario through many different agencies, not only assists the perpetrator but provides safety, support and counselling for the victim. The new changes in the family approach, the approach to family cases, will ensure that these very difficult and emotional cases can move through the system faster, with less confrontation and much more affordably, and I'm surprised the NDP don't—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, we now know that you have been working on the decision to close the Sarnia jail for three straight years. During that time, you and your ministry consulted local leaders a total of zero times and have since refused to supply any supporting documentation to justify your decision.

Last week, we learned, thanks to Sarnia Police Chief Phil Nelson, that the cost of security at the Sarnia courthouse will double to over \$770,000 as a direct result of your closure of the jail.

As we all know, there's only one taxpayer, and this is an increase in taxes. When will you show some transparency and let us know—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East.

Please continue.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** As we all know, there's only one taxpayer, and this is an increase in taxes. When will you show leadership and transparency and let us in on the big secret that there's a real cost to closing the Sarnia jail?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** That information has been provided. You know that the ministry officials will provide to any minister who happens to have that job the information on how savings can be effected overall in the corrections system in the province. You will know, for instance, that when your party was in power, you closed a number of jails in the province.

In fact, I have a quote from Mr. Runciman that says the following: "What we are doing with respect to the restructuring process is addressing the call of the Provincial Auditor in two reports, talking about the very high-cost system of corrections in Ontario. We currently have the highest-cost provincial system in the country.... We are making an effort, which the NDP initiated some time ago, to close our older, high-cost, inefficient and in many respects unsafe facilities."

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** When you're starting to quote from history—and I see you have no argument—you've got no defence. We didn't close that jail because it didn't make sense then, and it doesn't make sense now.

A week ago, the customs and immigration border guards union stated the decision to close the Sarnia jail seemed as if it was made without "proper analysis." Not surprisingly, Local 19 was not consulted prior to your decision. As a result of your decision, border guards will now have to make a five- to six-hour round trip down Highway 40 to take prisoners to the finance minister's riding.

By my count, we now know that in making this decision, you failed to consult with the mayor of Sarnia, the Lambton county warden, the Sarnia police chief, the First Nations community, the First Nations police force, the OPP, the RCMP, jail administration, jail guards, Canada Border Services, the border guards, the Sarnia law association, the business community, the local MP and the MPP. Minister, who did you speak with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I promised not to quote Ted Arnott on this one today, but I will. It may be the same people who are quoted, when the Conservative government closed the jails in Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Halton.

Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I think the same kind of consultations took place in Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo—Wellington, Parry Sound, Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph, Cornwall, the Burtch facility, Lindsay, Whitby, Brampton, Millbrook and Sault Ste. Marie. Those are all jails which were closed by the previous Conservative government. Because, as my friend the member for Wellington—Halton Hills said at the time, "I think the people of Ontario would expect us to look at how we're operating the system of provincial jails and find ways to do it better and cheaper."

I know that it's very difficult when you think of history, of all the jails that were closed by the previous—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Four years ago, right before an election, the McGuinty Liberals promised to redevelop the former Grace Hospital site into a long-term-care home, but it's a mess. Construction hasn't started. Windsor families are left with clogged emergency rooms, and the situation is so bad, it's been declared a crisis by the LHIN.



The finance minister, in fact, has recently questioned his own government's management of the project. Does the Minister of Health agree with the finance minister's assessment?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I am more than happy to say is that we need these long-term-care beds in Windsor and we need them as soon as we possibly can. There have been challenges with the progress, there is no question about that. We are working very hard with various parties to get these beds built and open for the people of Windsor and area as soon as we possibly can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Just in case the health minister is unaware of the criticism levelled by her cabinet colleague, let me quote his comments: "As finance minister it really bugs me that there wasn't better analysis done beforehand."

Does the minister agree with the finance minister that their government—her government, this government—botched the project? And the most important question is, when will we actually see shovels in the ground on this project?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I do want to say is that this is a project that we are very focused on. There have been key goals that have been achieved: the incorporation of a single-purpose organization entity as required by the lender; there's been submission of a fully executed site plan control agreement; submission of a fully executed management contract between the operator and Extendicare Inc.; submission of sub-trade tender results; and a draft copy of the project's final estimates of cost.

We are continuing to monitor this project on a daily basis. I will underline how important it is for the people of Windsor and Essex county that this building be built as soon as possible.

#### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. My riding of Scarborough Southwest is home to newcomers from around the world. When newcomers get settled into Ontario and into the workforce, it's important that they know their workplace rights. Newcomers who are adjusting to a new work culture must be aware of what constitutes harassment and discrimination. If they feel their employer is treating them unfairly, newcomers need to know who they can turn to for help. They need to know what their rights are and how to exercise them.

Minister, what is the government doing to educate Ontario newcomers about their human rights in this province?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We're fortunate here in Ontario to benefit from the significant contributions that thousands of newcomers make to this province each year. Ontario's fundamental values of inclusion, diversity and respect for human rights make our province the best place in the world to call home.

When our newcomers arrive in Ontario, we have a number of ways to ensure that they're aware of their rights. These include our Welcome to Ontario guide, our website [ontarioimmigration.ca](http://ontarioimmigration.ca) and through our many settlement agency partners.

We are the only party with a plan for newcomers in Ontario. Instead of being straight with our newcomers, the opposition leader is hiding his plans to scrap the Human Rights Tribunal. That's not surprising, because in 2003 the only reference to immigration was under the crime section of their election platform.

Unlike the opposition, we stand up for our newcomers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Ontario has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants from around the world. Many of my constituents have come to Ontario to escape civil strife and oppression. Many of them come to Ontario in search of new opportunities and for a better life.

When newcomers arrive here in Ontario, they need our support to get adjusted to life in our province. This includes learning about Ontario's workplace culture, job search support and language and employment training. I also know that the government has made substantial investments in the potential of our newcomers.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the government doing to help our newcomers get integrated into Ontario's workplaces?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you for that question. Integrating newcomers into the workforce is the key to their success and Ontario's success. We have a plan that's working and we're getting results. We're reducing barriers and investing in our newcomers so that they can get good jobs. That's why we've invested in bridge training programs that have helped over 41,000 newcomers find jobs. Our language training courses have helped 120,000 newcomers this year alone at no cost.

Unlike the Harris-Hudak PCs, we've made—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No. I've reminded the honourable member and the government before about the reference to the Leader of the Opposition. He has not been the leader of a government and you cannot persist at that.

New question.

#### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The town of Bradford West Gwillimbury and the county of Simcoe have asked you to commit to MTO funding for the new Highway 400 interchange at the 5th Line in Bradford West Gwillimbury. Will your ministry be providing this funding?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite has spoken to me about this issue. I'm very well aware of it.

What you need to know is that this year alone, we've invested \$2.8 billion in road construction and repair around the province: roads and bridges. We're very aware that the baby boom infrastructure in this province needs to be upgraded. We're making record investments



in that. We will continue to do so and I will continue to work with the member opposite on that particular project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The new interchange is needed so that Bradford can develop new industries to provide jobs. Before your government stopped the Bradford bypass, development was planned beside the bypass. Now the town has moved its employment plans closer to Highway 400. To be a success, the town's new employment lands depend on the 5th Line interchange.

Will you help the people of Bradford West Gwillimbury? And when might they expect you to be able to put a shovel in the ground?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, we've helped the people of Bradford West Gwillimbury to the tune of \$990,173. We've made significant investments in that particular area alone. We will continue to work with that particular municipality and I will continue to work with this member.

Since 2003, our government has put \$15 billion into building and rebuilding bridges and roads in this province. The infrastructure investment, since we've been in office, has increased exponentially to what it was before.

We will continue to work with every municipality in the province. There are many, many projects that, of course, need attention. This is one that I will continue to work with the member on, and we will continue to make those significant infrastructure investments.

1140

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Tritium is a radioactive substance emitted from nuclear plants into air and water. In 2006, Toronto's medical officer of health said that Ontario's current tritium standard for drinking water is too lax and poses an unacceptable cancer risk. In May 2009, the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council recommended that the Ontario government dramatically cut the tritium standard. Why has the government failed for two years now to implement the council's recommendation?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my colleague for the excellent question. First of all, just a bit of facts: Of course, tritium is a naturally occurring element in the environment, but the member is absolutely correct that when it comes to our Candu reactors, tritium is one of the by-products. It's very important that we protect our sources of drinking water.

I have been receiving quite a bit of advice on this issue. I want to share with the member that given the advice of the Drinking Water Advisory Council—their advice to me—I've referred this matter and asked for some additional scientific feedback from the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion.

I think it's very important, as the Minister of the Environment, that we ensure that we have standards that are the safest possible in the province of Ontario. But it's very important that those standards be rooted in science. I

know there is some debate on this issue, and as a result, that's why I've referred it to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The minister has heard from the medical officer of health of the city of Toronto and the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council. The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition wrote to the environment minister last September urging him to implement the Drinking Water Advisory Council recommendation to lower the allowable level of tritium in the water. They still have not received a response to their letter. In March, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission said that they have “no idea” why the Ontario government has still, after almost two years, taken no action on the council's recommendation. When will the McGuinty government finally act to protect Ontarians from cancer by reducing the allowable level of tritium in drinking water?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I do want to share with the good people of Ontario—because we take our safe drinking water so very, very seriously—that whether there's the current level or the proposed level in the province of Ontario, our water is below any of the proposed levels by any of the people who have recommended it. I do want to assure people that the drinking water in this province is indeed safe.

The question is, what is the appropriate level? There are two scientific issues that have to be resolved. One has to do with long-term exposure and the other has to do with if there is an incident. As a result, given that, I have decided to refer the matter and to seek the expert advice of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion so that I can ensure that the new standard in the province of Ontario is indeed rooted in science, which is a requirement of the province of Ontario and our ministry.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment as well. While countries around the world are dealing with the issues of climate change, we know that the most profound actions to help our environment happen in our own backyard. We all have a role to play by walking to school, biking to work or by taking transit wherever possible. In rural areas we can plan the reduction of the number of times we use our vehicles by piggybacking a number of errands into one trip.

Today, environmental organizations are outside Queen's Park to ask all of us in this House what we will do to protect the environment. I will ask for them: Will the minister come clean and step up to protect the environment?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to welcome our friends who have come to raise awareness of this.

Many times in this House I have said—and I think I'm going to have to correct the record—that the party opposite, the opposition, has a secret love affair with dirty coal. But yesterday, they professed their undying love for



dirty coal in the province of Ontario by telling the world that we will not be, under their government, interested in conservation or in renewable sources of energy but rather they'll go with cheap, even if it puts the lives of our lungs and of our little children at risk. That is the problem with having a love affair with dirty coal. On this side of the House, we are phasing out dirty coal because our children—  
*Interjection.*

**Speaker of the House:** The member from Renfrew will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.  
**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

DEFERRED VOTES

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION  
ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On May 3, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes		
Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia
Albanese, Laura	Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill
Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Christine	Murray, Glen R.
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Hampton, Howard	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bentley, Christopher	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilson, Jim
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Yakabuski, John
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 83; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** So ordered.  
There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.  
*The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.*

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I would like to introduce to the House Paul Marai. Paul is a new school board trustee with the Halton Catholic District School Board in the region of Halton, and also a former staff member in my office. Welcome, Paul.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PAUL MARAI

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** It's with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to address some remarkable accomplishments of one of my former staff members, Paul Marai.

This past fall, 22-year-old Paul was successfully elected as a school board trustee in the Halton Catholic District School Board, making him one of the youngest elected officials in our province. Not only did Paul run a successful and victorious campaign, but since being elected he has been a tireless advocate for reversing the ban on gay-straight alliances implemented by the former board. Over the past several months, Paul has been speaking up for students, not only in Oakville and Halton communities, but across the province.

His input and attention have helped shape the debate on this critical issue in our province. Throughout all the meetings and discussions about GSA, Paul has brought his knowledge and his experience, and has consistently defended students. He has ensured there was someone advocating for what was best for students, and emphasized the importance for them to be feeling safe and accepted in their own school communities.

I want to congratulate Paul on his accomplishments. I am confident that this young man will continue to advocate and champion issues and to foray into areas that others deem unpopular. Congratulations, Paul.

LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** A while ago I received many cards from individuals, which I will now read.

"I've sent you this card to let you know I support the teams that care for the" hundreds of thousands of "residents served each year in Ontario's long-term-care homes. From nurses and personal support workers to housekeeping and laundry staff, to foodservice workers and maintenance people—each member of these teams ensures a caring and safe home. They deserve our support.

"These teams play an important role in the quality of life and well-being of some of Ontario's frailest elderly. They are the dedicated people who provide care and service to residents all day, every day. Yet these teams are threatened because government funding is not keeping pace with increasing resident care needs and regulatory demands.

"Please work to ensure there is appropriate funding to support the teams so they can continue to support Ontario's long-term-care residents. To learn more, please visit [www.oltca.com/we-care](http://www.oltca.com/we-care)."

As the needs of long-term-care residents are constantly changing, reflecting our population's changing activities, workplace stresses and family problems, their needs when they are at the long-term-care stage are different than in the past. We need to ensure that we have properly educated and trained support personal to care for them.

To ensure that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care gets this message, I will ask one of the pages to come forward to give these cards to the minister. Thank you.

#### PLASCO ENERGY GROUP

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to take this opportunity to speak about Plasco Energy Group, an exciting and innovative company in my city of Ottawa. Plasco is developing world-leading technology that converts municipal solid waste into green power through a process known as gasification. Through this revolutionary process, more than 98% of the waste used in gasification is diverted from landfill and converted into usable products.

Equally important to reducing waste, the process also results in a net energy gain, providing the sensible alternative generation that is so crucial to our 21st-century energy supply needs.

Plasco's technology reduces our dependence on fossil fuel generation, has no external emissions and is actually a net reducer of greenhouse gas emissions.

I want to specifically mention Rod Bryden, president and CEO of Plasco. Rod is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and a resident of Ottawa Centre. Those from Ottawa know Rod very well, as he has been involved in many business ventures and community endeavours in the city of Ottawa.

Plasco Energy Group represents the best of what the Ottawa technology sector has to offer the world when it comes to innovation and the exciting new green energy industry. Our government made a wise early investment in Plasco with a \$4-million loan in 2007 to support their groundbreaking work. Since then, Plasco has leveraged

\$350 million of investment and financing from the private sector, creating jobs and economic development in the city of Ottawa.

#### CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise in the House today to congratulate Christopher Perkins, a remarkable young archer from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. He's a young man who has perfection in his sights. The 18-year-old from the village of Athens was named male athlete of the month for March by the United States Sports Academy.

Winning this prestigious award put him in some pretty lofty company. The academy's female athlete of the month for March was none other than Caroline Wozniacki, the world's number-one-ranked tennis player.

Although Perkins was humble in reacting to the honour, it's hard to argue with the choice. He set a world junior and senior record by shooting an incredible 599 out of a possible 600 at the Canadian indoor archery championships in Caledon in March. That world record is a testament to his eagle eyes, steady hands and nerves of steel. Of the 60 arrows he shot that day, 59 landed in the bull's eye. One arrow just missed the centre ring but gave him enough to eclipse a record that has stood since 1999.

This brush with perfection is only the latest in a long list of accomplishments for Perkins, who won a gold medal at the Canada Winter Games in Halifax in February, when he posted a score of 595. As a student at Athens District High School, he won gold at the Ontario high school championships three years in a row. He has also represented Canada at many international competitions. I have no doubt he'll continue to bring plenty of gold back home to Athens.

On behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville, I want to congratulate Christopher and his parents, Spencer and Deanna.

#### CATHOLIC EDUCATION ÉDUCATION CATHOLIQUE

**Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C.:** It is my pleasure to inform you that across Canada and in fact throughout the world, World Catholic Education Day is celebrated on June 2.

Catholic education has served parents and their children in most nations throughout the world for centuries. In Canada, Catholic education is an integral contributor to our Canadian identity and culture, serving the nation through faith-based leading and learning.

Catholic education has helped define Canadian society through its deeply rooted teachings of social justice, service to the community and ongoing promotion of respect and dignity of all persons. The presence of Catholic education is based on the values of peace, justice and respect—values that are inherent to our Canadian identity.



Accomplishments over the past two centuries of the Canadian Catholic school system, both English and French, have been an integral part of the growth and spirit of Canada.

J'étais engagée dans le monde de l'éducation catholique comme une étudiante dans ma province natale de la Nouvelle-Écosse. De plus, j'étais la présidente du conseil scolaire privé de Barrie qui a lutté pour la construction d'un lycée catholique.

Congratulations to all who are involved in Catholic education in our province and all the provinces in Canada as you join with colleagues throughout the world who are celebrating World Catholic Education Day on June 2, 2011.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I rise to bring to the attention of the Minister of Transportation a resolution that was passed unanimously by Newmarket council this past Monday.

The resolution points out that gridlock is impacting not only residents but also businesses in this growing community. The major north-south arteries, especially Highways 404 and 400, are becoming almost impassable at certain times of the day. This has huge costs to business through loss of productivity, and it also impacts our quality of life.

I draw to the attention of the Minister of Transportation the following excerpt from the resolution:

"Whereas GO Transit falls under provincial jurisdiction and is a responsibility of Metrolinx;

1510

"And whereas Metrolinx is working on a MoveOntario 2020 initiative attempting to address gridlock in the GTA;

"Therefore be it resolved that the council of the town of Newmarket:

"Expresses formal support for more frequent GO train service between Newmarket and Union Station as a way to reduce gridlock and provide residents with a convenient public transportation option to downtown Toronto...."

The resolution goes on to call on Metrolinx to make more frequent GO train service a priority as soon as possible in the Metrolinx MoveOntario plan.

As the MPP for Newmarket-Aurora, I am registering my support for this motion, and I look forward to working with the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx to make more frequent GO train service a priority in the MoveOntario plan.

### CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION TRAINING

### FORMATION EN RÉANIMATION CARDIORESPIRATOIRE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It was my privilege on May 6 to attend the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT)

Foundation High School CPR and defibrillator program launch at Louis Riel public school in Orléans, not far from my office. This school, by the way, was selected as one of the best in Ontario by the Fraser Institute.

La Fondation ACT est un chef de file dans l'instauration de l'enseignement obligatoire du programme de secourisme RCR au secondaire. Pour mettre en place un programme durable et autonome, la fondation s'appuie fortement sur les partenaires locaux pour fournir aux écoles les ressources nécessaires.

En septembre 2008, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a annoncé d'ailleurs une subvention de 1,4 million de dollars pour permettre à la Fondation ACT d'implanter un tel programme.

The launch on May 6 last week was to bring the high school CPR automated external defibrillator (AED) training program to Ottawa French high schools.

Le programme sera offert à 12 écoles secondaires provenant du Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est et du Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario.

More than 1,800 grade 9 students will now be trained in CPR and how to use the AED, an electronic device that administers an electric shock to restore heart rhythm in case of cardiac arrest. Using the AED along with CPR can improve cardiac arrest survival rates by up to 75% when used in the first few minutes, according to one of their partners, the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Once implemented in all high schools across Ontario, 155,000 grade 9 students will be trained in the life-saving skills of CPR and AED each year. It is an extraordinary initiative by the ACT foundation, and our youth will now be better equipped to help save lives.

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Last Friday, May 6, I had the honour of attending a retirement function hosted by the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association. The event was held in Scarborough and celebrated the careers of over 50 firefighters who are retiring or have retired in the past year. It was remarkable to witness those in attendance, who reminisced about their achievements and the contributions they had made toward protecting our communities.

During this reception, I spoke with many firefighters, and one reminded me of the heroism of the brave men and women who were involved in the September 11, 2001, attacks that occurred in New York City. One firefighter mentioned to me that some of the firefighters involved were able to go up several storeys in the building, carrying with them gear that weighed over 50 pounds. They were not concerned for their own safety, but the safety of the people who were inside the building. This reminded me of the risks our firefighters endure every day when they are called to the scene of a fire.

On behalf of the government, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the firefighters who are retiring this

year for the years of public service and their dedication to ensuring the safety of our communities.

### THUNDER BAY ECONOMY

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thunder Bay's unemployment rate has consistently outperformed the provincial and national averages, and here are some reasons why:

- \$30 million for infrastructure at Lakehead University and Con College;

- \$773 million for northern highways;

- a new \$200-million courthouse, 225 workers on site at peak;

- a new long-term-care home, a \$100-million project; and

- 1,000 people working at our local Bombardier plant, an increase of 500 to 600 jobs and \$1.4 billion of government investment.

The economy is also diversifying:

- 15 million government dollars establishing Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, with 104 new full-time employees, expected to get to 150;

- Tornado Medical Systems just had their grand opening today, with 200 people expected by the end of 2013;

- RegenMed, a bone and tissue bank, 30 employees to be hired;

- AbiBow, a \$50-million cogen project, 56 permanent new jobs plus construction jobs;

- AbiBow sawmill, 50 new jobs, saving 160 more;

- Terrace Bay's mill has hired 340 workers back;

- Global Sticks and Oliver Paipoonge, hoping to hire up to 100, grand opening next week;

- Atikokan Renewable Fuels, 95 brand new jobs, wood allocation;

- Activation Labs, 120 new jobs; Osisko's Hammond Reef, 100 local residents working there plus 100 contractors;

- and Lac des Iles mine, 200 new workers.

The list goes on. I don't have time to get to it all; that's a partial list. Thunder Bay's economy is doing quite well.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bills, without amendment:

Bill Pr32, An Act to revive 1518186 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr46, An Act to revive Faradale Farms Ltd.

Bill Pr47, An Act to revive Big A Amusements Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

#### MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DE L'AGRESSION SEXUELLE

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I rise today to recognize May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

En mai et pendant toute l'année, nous devons toujours nous souvenir que chaque femme devrait et doit se sentir en sûreté et être en sécurité dans son foyer, dans sa communauté et dans son lieu de travail.

In May and throughout the entire year, we must always remember that every woman should and must feel safe and be safe in her home, community and workplace. Our daughters need to feel safe when they're at school, our mothers need to feel safe in their homes and our sisters and friends need to feel safe at work. That is why our government recently introduced Ontario's sexual violence action plan: Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives, a four-year strategy that will lay the groundwork for a future free of sexual violence.

To truly change attitudes, we need to start by raising awareness to prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place. There are still far too many myths associated with sexual violence and sexual assault, so everyone needs to know the facts.

One in three women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime. The perpetrator, contrary to popular belief, is most often not a stranger. In reality, about 82% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim—a friend, acquaintance or family member. Any form of sexual violence can have traumatic, long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects. That is why our sexual violence action plan directly focuses on improving supports for victims.

C'est pourquoi notre plan d'action contre la violence sexuelle met directement l'accent sur l'amélioration des soutiens offerts aux victimes.

Unfortunately, fewer than 10% of sexual assault victims report the crime to the police. A victim can be reluctant to come forward. She may feel shame or even think that she will not be believed. So we are taking action that reflects what we heard from many brave survivors who shared their stories, the front-line workers who gave valuable advice and those from the violence-against-women sector who guided our work during province-wide consultations last summer.

We heard about the critical services that sexual assault centres provide for survivors. For that reason, we have



increased funding to these centres by \$3 million over four years in support of their ongoing efforts to meet the unique needs of women in communities across Ontario.

On nous a aussi expliqué que les femmes pouvaient être confrontées à des obstacles linguistiques lorsqu'elles demandent de l'aide. Nous investissons donc plus de 3,7 millions de dollars sur quatre ans dans les services d'interprétation pour que les victimes et les survivantes puissent communiquer et être comprises dans leur langue en cas d'urgence.

We also heard that women may face language barriers when coming forward for help, so we're investing over \$3.7 million over four years in interpreter services so that victims and survivors can communicate and be understood in their language at a time of crisis.

1520

When sexual violence does occur, victims need sensitive and compassionate care that responds to their needs, so we are also investing in training programs for professionals across Ontario, such as community, health and justice workers, to ensure that victims receive the very best support.

Sexual Assault Prevention Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about this all-too-prevalent crime, to dispel the myths and encourage everyone to do their part to prevent sexual violence. It is also a time to reiterate that sexual violence in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in Ontario.

Le changement d'attitudes permettra de changer des vies. En nous élevant contre la violence sexuelle, nous ferons de l'Ontario un lieu plus sécuritaire pour toutes les femmes et leurs familles.

Changing attitudes will change lives. By speaking up against sexual violence, we will make Ontario a safer place for all women and their families.

## FAMILY SERVICE DAY

### JOURNÉE DES SERVICES À LA FAMILLE

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's my honour to recognize the good work of family service organizations throughout Ontario during family service day at Queen's Park—and why don't we take just a moment to thank them for the good work they do in this House?

Notre gouvernement est fier de contribuer au financement d'un grand nombre de programmes de Services à la famille-Ontario.

Our government is proud to support many Family Service Ontario agencies by funding many of their programs. I want to take the opportunity to thank my colleague the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, for the work that she and her ministry do in liaising with these agencies. Her ministry works very closely with these agencies to offer a variety of supports, including those dealing with violence against women and programs for young adults who have a developmental disability.

Je profite de l'occasion pour remercier ces organismes exceptionnels pour leur engagement à l'égard des

familles et des personnes seules qui font face, au quotidien, à des difficultés énormes.

It's an opportunity today to thank these organizations for their commitment to families and individuals who face very, very difficult challenges in their lives. Nearly 250,000 Ontario families and individuals benefit from supports such as relationship and financial counselling, substance abuse programs, services for people with disabilities, supports provided to victims of domestic violence and so many more. This is important work. It's important to families, it's important to communities, and that means that it's very important to us in government.

Family services play an integral role in bringing our programs to life in communities throughout Ontario. Its agencies provide valuable services during all times, but, in particular, during difficult times. Our government shares their commitment to improving the lives of Ontario families. My ministry recently introduced significant reforms to strengthen the family justice system and improve access to justice by making the system easier to use, less confrontational and more affordable.

Our ministry's partner assault response program is just an example of the way that we can assist families in difficult times. It's a component of our domestic violence court program and offers specialized counselling and educational services by community agencies to people who have assaulted their partners. These programs aim to enhance victim safety, hold offenders accountable for their behaviour and ensure that such behaviour doesn't continue to occur.

In addition to the services provided by Family Service Ontario agencies, our government has launched a number of different initiatives to prevent violence and abuse and support women and their families. Our new sexual violence action plan, which my colleague just spoke about, is a very important example, targeting sexual violence against women with a comprehensive strategy that will prevent sexual violence and improve supports for survivors.

A key component of that plan is public education, a recognition of the fact that if we want to eradicate, eliminate, sexual violence against families, against individuals, we must eradicate the attitudes that have been allowed to persist. An example of the work that's being done is our neighbours, friends and families campaign. It helps people close to a woman who might be abused recognize the signs of abuse and reach out to help. To educate the public on what to look for, we offer brochures and safety cards in 12 different languages. This successful campaign recognizes that family violence is a community problem which needs a community-wide solution.

We're also doing more to help women whose first language is not English. Our free English-language or language interpreter services program helps nearly 6,000 women each year in more than 60 languages. They can get services in health, law and social services areas. As part of our new action plan, we expanded access to these services. That means more people, for more reasons, will be able to get assistance. We're also supporting women's



counselling services that helped more than 55,000 women and more than 6,500 children last year.

We recently announced the new Family Court support worker program to help support victims of domestic violence during Family Court cases for separation and divorce, and we've reconfirmed our commitment to child and family justice in our recent budget.

An example of this is our expansion of family mediation and information services to all Ontario courts by the end of this summer, providing family law clients with information and making referrals to services to help families reach resolutions and move forward with their lives at a very, very difficult time. These programs and many others provide a continuum of support to families and individuals.

Building stronger, healthier communities and reducing the incidence of family violence is a collective responsibility. There's more work to be done. We need everyone's help, everyone's voice and everyone's action.

I invite us all, once again, to join me and say thank you to the family service organizations which, throughout Ontario, show such a deep commitment and provide such wonderful assistance to families throughout the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak about Sexual Assault Prevention Month in this, the month of May. We strongly believe, as I know all members in this House do, that women have the right to feel and be safe in their home, their community and their workplace.

Sexual assault is a horrific crime. The victims of sexual assault often suffer and experience long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects and trauma. That is why it is so critical for us to realize that we must do everything we can to eradicate sexual assault and violence, and, of course, that very much means changing attitudes.

Thus, this month, we have the opportunity, all of us, to raise awareness about sexual violence and encourage everyone in this province to do their part to prevent it. It is a time where we can come together to find solutions to prevent violence and find better ways to support our victims and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Every woman in this province deserves to live without the fear of violence. Twenty eleven marks the 23rd year that Ontario has recognized Sexual Assault Prevention Month. Unfortunately, when we take a look at the studies, the problem is still too common and prevalent.

Each year in Ontario, over 7,000 people are sexually assaulted. The vast majority of them are women between the ages of 15 and 24. Even more disturbing is the immeasurable fear and torment that the victims live with. We know that only 10% of the assaults are reported to the authorities. This number is far too small, and it must

change. No longer should the victims of sexual assault feel frightened or ashamed. We need to be able to encourage and support them to come forward, share their experience and receive the support required for a successful recovery.

I'd like to commend the women who recently came to Queen's Park to raise awareness about sexual assault and help dispel the myths. Their message was clear, and it was irrefutable: Victims are not ever to be blamed. Sexual assault is a crime, and nothing excuses it.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to congratulate and thank everybody for their part in working to eliminate sexual assault in the province of Ontario.

1530

#### FAMILY SERVICE DAY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the minister's remarks on Family Service Ontario day.

Family Service Ontario represents 41 not-for-profit agencies across the province that provide many different services. I had the opportunity today to meet with Mark Creedon, the executive director of Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, along with two members of their volunteer board of directors and representatives from the sistering program. It's too bad that I don't have more time to talk about the sistering program, which is based on a peer-support model. Women who are victims of domestic violence can find support from women who used to be victims. It gives them a friendly voice to talk to and someone who knows what they're going through. One woman shared her story with me about how Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin helped her through an abusive relationship and gave her the tools and access to the services she needed for her and her young daughter to succeed. The reality is that 87% of women who are dealing with abuse do not seek help through a shelter, which is why Family Service Ontario is so important in our communities.

I was pleased to join Family Service Ontario for their luncheon today and was really struck, as I was in my meeting, about how volunteer-oriented this organization is. In fact, for every paid staff member at Family Service Ontario, there are two volunteers working just as hard to make sure Ontario families are getting the supports and services they need.

Volunteers truly do make organizations like this one as successful as they are. The over 3,000 volunteers who take time out of their lives and away from their families to help those individuals get the services and support they need deserve our appreciation.

It is your dedication to your community that makes a huge difference in the lives of others.

I also want to thank the volunteer board of directors. I know what a huge time commitment serving on a board can be, and your time is appreciated.

Again, thank you to Family Service Ontario for all your hard work. Our communities value your presence



and, like some of the stories I heard today, many families have thrived because of your commitment.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH FAMILY SERVICE DAY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It gives me great honour to rise on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats on Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

I have the figures from the United States: 700,000 women a year in the United States are raped. In Canada, we can extrapolate. I couldn't find the figures for all of Canada. Let's assume 70,000, since we're about a tenth of the size. You heard the member from Kitchener-Waterloo talk about 7,000 in Ontario alone. These are horrendous numbers. This is a war on women; let us make no mistake about it.

We in the New Democrats thought that one of the first responses from the province of Ontario should be non-partisan, should be an all-party standing committee of women dealing with domestic violence. We put forward a motion years ago. It sits on the order paper still, gathering dust. Nothing has been done by this government about that.

Let me talk about what hasn't been done, because I'm tired of the platitudes. I'm tired of standing up here every year and listening to us talk about the issue when we know we're not doing enough about it. One of the things we're not doing enough about—and kudos to family services—is that we're not funding family services enough. We're not giving money to the front-line service providers that we should be doing.

Let me give an example of that. It's just around the corner, down on College. It's called Victim Services. They're a victim crisis response team—I would wager, if not the largest in Ontario, certainly one of the largest groups of volunteers plus staff members who go out 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and deal with 20,000 victims a year along with the police. And guess what? In 1990, they were funded \$286 per victim. You know what their funding was in 2010? Thirty-one dollars. That's how far it has gone down: from \$286 per victim in 1990 to \$31 today. That is shameful. It's unacceptable. Every year they have been here before this government talking about the flatline in their funding—every single year, with no response.

They deal with 35 different languages. They deal with 150 volunteers. I know their story because I've been working with them ever since I was elected. I imagine their story is not alone. I imagine that their story is replicated in family services of various sorts across Ontario. This is unacceptable.

Every year, I will stand up yet again and say this yet again until funding is actually provided to front-line service providers for victims of sexual assault and violence. Until the number goes from \$31 up a bit, I'll be here, or the ghost of me will be here, saying it again.

On a happy note, on a good note—I want to leave on a positive note—there is one initiative that we've managed to get together on in this House. It's called Ruth's Daughters of Canada. We had faith leaders from across the faith spectrum come to Queen's Park and sign on a document that said they were committed to eradicating domestic violence. Just about every faith was represented here, and the members from Etobicoke Centre and Whitby-Oshawa also signed on on behalf of their parties. So Ruth's Daughters of Canada, last Mother's Day, was launched in this place, and chapters are beginning in places of faith and worship across Ontario as we speak. So that happened.

If that can happen, why can't we have a standing committee that deals with this issue? If that can happen, why can't we have funding that really provides our front-line service workers with the tools they need to deal with this most intractable of problems?

Remember, it's not just in the past; this is also about our daughters and our granddaughters, as well as our mothers and our grandmothers. May it not continue for another generation. May we finally overcome our partisan differences in this place and actually get together and do something.

## PETITIONS

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government of Ontario have continued to ignore farmers and have slashed support to farmers by over \$145 million in 2010 alone"—unbelievable; and

"Whereas agriculture makes an important contribution to the Ontario economy and deserves investment" and respect; and

"Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each year while food banks across Ontario continue to struggle to feed those in need; and

"Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey"—he's here today—"has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, to help provide tax relief to farmers and assist local food banks; and

"Whereas, if the McGuinty Liberals truly support farm families and wish to fight poverty, the Legislative Assembly ... should immediately pass MPP Bob Bailey's bill" today;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call ... Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay" before the election on October 6.

I urge the House to support this today for Bob Bailey.

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm pleased to introduce the following petition:

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve and have the right to request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care pay for the diagnostics required to identify and treat chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency for those MS patients plagued by this debilitating disease; and

"Whereas the diagnostics consisting of an MRI scan or Doppler image to be used to confirm constriction of the veins in the neck, and then, if warranted, the angioplasty procedure to dilate the veins in question. Currently, angioplasty is not an option for MS patients; and

"Whereas it should be the choice of the MS patient, on the advice of his or her physician, to have the procedure done in Ontario and not to have to travel to foreign countries to have the procedure; and

1540

"Whereas we understand that while Dr. Paolo Zamboni's findings are still in the early stages, we believe that by allowing MS patients the choice of undergoing angioplasty (which is performed safely on a daily basis in Ontario) it will allow patient studies to monitor the effectiveness of this treatment. Patients suffering from MS do not have the time to wait for clinical trials due to the possible progression of the disease. We would also request that the province of Ontario work diligently with the federal government to conduct studies on MS and its association with chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency across Canada, as there are approximately 75,000 Canadians living with this disabling disease;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To provide funding to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to cover the costs of the MRI scan or Doppler image and the subsequent angioplasty, if necessary, for MS patients."

I'm proud to sign my signature in support of this.

## SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build solar-powered generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

"Whereas Tim Hudak, Jim Wilson and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renew-

able energy projects only in places where they are welcome, wanted and at prices Ontarians can afford;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new solar developments on municipalities that have not approved and whose citizens do not want them in their community."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

## KIDNEY DISEASE

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm delighted today to have a petition from Ken Sharp. Mr. Sharp has been a dialysis survivor for 30-plus years: one of the longest in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, Canada, draw the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

"Whereas kidney disease is a huge and growing problem in Canada; and

"Whereas real progress is being made in various ways of preventing and coping with kidney disease, in particular the development of a bio-artificial kidney;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make research funding available for the explicit purpose of conducting bio-artificial kidney research as an extension to the research being successfully conducted at several centres in the United States."

I agree with this petition and give it to page Jonathan.

## DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

As I am in agreement, I've affixed my signature and give it to page Caleb.

## ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I have a petition here from residents of the Guelph and Erin areas.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

"Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply-managed commodities; and

"Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We applaud the Ontario government's support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector."

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, express our concern regarding continued violence against women by their partners who are not supervised or monitored after being charged with domestic assault. Statistics show that retaliatory or continued violence against women by accused partners remains or escalates after charges are laid.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That domestic assault offenders be ordered to attend a partner assault response ... program as part of their bail process. This program monitors the offender's ongoing risk to the partner, offers him education and provides help to the victim."

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the proposed closure of the Sarnia Jail will impact 76 employees and result in a loss of over \$6 million to the local Sarnia-Lambton community; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government states that the Sarnia Jail is underutilized while in fact it is currently at 105% capacity; and

"Whereas there are no costs currently associated with transporting inmates from the Sarnia Jail to the Sarnia courthouse, and transporting inmates from Windsor to Sarnia will greatly increase costs, costs which may become a burden to the city of Sarnia and thus local taxpayers; and

"Whereas the mayor, local OPP, the Sarnia police chief, the RCMP, aboriginal police, First Nations ... and the Canadian border services were not consulted prior to the Sarnia Jail closure, and if closed, Sarnia would become the busiest border crossing in Ontario without a jail;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty Liberal government immediately conduct a public review of the Sarnia Jail and make that cost-benefit analysis available...."

I agree with this and will send this and will send this down with Jonathan, and I'll affix my signature.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I will sign this petition and send it with Rachel.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Brockville and area community has for years demonstrated its support for Brockville General

Hospital by raising millions of dollars in funds and volunteering thousands of hours of time; and

"Whereas Brockville General Hospital is a major employer and an essential part of the current and future economic and social fabric of our community; and

"Whereas community hospitals must offer a full range of services, including surgeries, to be viable; and

"Whereas a proposal to remove surgical services from Brockville General Hospital has been condemned in the community and is undermining ongoing efforts to recruit new health care professionals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care demand the South East Local Health Integration Network remove any option to eliminate the surgical department at Brockville General Hospital from its review of health care services in the region."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Melanie.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A petition: We're now up to 2,000 names that have come in.

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

1550

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I agree with the petition and sign it.

#### SPEED LIMITS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current speed limit as posted through the village of Humphrey in the township of Seguin is 70 kilometres per hour;

"Whereas Highway 141 passes through the village, consisting of an elementary school, fire hall, municipal office and works department yard, a community centre, including library and arena, as well as a newly developed 25-unit subdivision;

"Whereas the posted speed limit in the village of Rosseau, 15 kilometres east of Humphrey, is 50 kilometres per hour, does not have a school on the highway but has been deemed to be worthy of a reduced speed limit;

"Now, therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reduce the posted speed limit within the boundaries of the village of Humphrey to 50 kilometres per hour."

I support this petition and shall sign it.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this petition. I've signed it and I present it to page Melanie.

#### MATTHEWS HOUSE HOSPICE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the number of clients served by Matthews House Hospice has doubled in less than three years, while funding provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through the Central LHIN remains substantially unchanged; and

"Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central LHIN and among the lowest-funded in the province, serving as many clients or more than others receiving substantially more money; and

"Whereas, in February 2010, Matthews House Hospice was promised a short-term and a long-term solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN and that the long-term solution has not materialized; and

"Whereas, in January, Matthews House Hospice was told by the Central LHIN that any adjustment would have to come from the ministry, while two months later the ministry informed Matthews House Hospice that it would have to work with the Central LHIN to solve its funding issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty instruct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to appoint someone with



authority to meet with the board representatives of Matthews House Hospice to sort out how they can get a just resolution for the people of south Simcoe needing hospice care, a resolution that ensures that their promise of a long-term solution is kept, giving them base funding equal to that of other hospices in Central LHIN.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TAXATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I move that, in 2003, Premier Dalton McGuinty signed a pledge not to raise taxes on Ontario families before forcing them to pay higher personal, corporate, income and payroll taxes. He brought in the largest personal income tax increase in provincial history with the health tax and the largest sales tax increase with the HST. He also increased the tax burden on Ontario families through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes. Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on Premier Dalton McGuinty not to create any new taxes, including a carbon tax, or hike the HST that Ontario families pay. This is addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. MacLeod has moved opposition day number 5. Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I want to thank my colleague the member for Nepean—Carleton, the Ontario PC critic for revenue and government accountability, for bringing this important motion forward here today. My colleague, thank you very much; strong leadership, well done.

This opposition day standing in the name of the member from Nepean—Carleton comes directly from Ontario families, from the families that she speaks with, that I speak with as I travel across the province, that the Ontario PC caucus speaks with each day.

From conversations at Tim Hortons, the local playground, the lineup at the grocery store and through our haveyoursayontario.ca survey, the message is clear. After almost eight years of the McGuinty Liberals, Ontario families need relief. They need a Premier who will give them a chance to catch up and not one who sees families as his own personal ATM. And they need that relief because, for too long, Ontario families have been forced to bear the burden of Premier McGuinty's inability to get his spending under control, to get control over his pet projects and the increased taxes that come about as a result.

There is a choice to be made and it really is a matter of simple arithmetic: Either our spending must be restrained to meet our revenues or our taxes must be raised to pay for all this Liberal spending. And sadly, Ontario families know all too well what Premier McGuinty's choice will be. Former Canadian Taxpayers Federation director

Kevin Gaudet—who, I want to say, is one of our outstanding Ontario PC candidates, running in Pickering—Scarborough East—joined us here at Queen's Park today to remind all of us about the kind of choices that Premier McGuinty makes.

Mr. Gaudet brought a pledge to Queen's Park, one that was signed on September 11, 2003, just prior to the 2003 election. It was called the taxpayer protection promise and it said that if he formed the government, Premier McGuinty would not raise taxes without the consent of Ontario voters. We all remember very well the picture of Premier McGuinty signing that pledge, taking that oath, swearing up and down that he would not increase taxes on Ontario families—and then we know what happened next. He broke his promise. He increased taxes on Ontario families. We know he'll do it again, and that's why we need change here in the province of Ontario.

As soon as he had the keys to the Premier's office in his hands, Premier McGuinty brought in the health tax—the so-called health tax—the largest increase in taxes on income in Ontario's history. It took \$3 billion each and every year out of the pockets of Ontario families.

And then we saw it again. Just before the 2007 election, guess what happened?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He promised not to raise them again, I'll betcha.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The member from Renfrew is exactly right; he was paying close attention to what was happening in 2007. We saw this movie before in 2003, and in 2007 Premier McGuinty said once again that he would not raise taxes on Ontario families. But what happened? After the election he broke his promise again and brought in the HST tax grab, netting another \$3 billion from hard-working Ontario families. And to make matters worse, on that very same day, July 1, 2010—Canada Day—Premier McGuinty tried to use his HST to cover up a new tax in our province. He tried to sneak in under the shadow of the HST an eco-tax on TVs, alarm clocks and more than 9,000 items that Ontario families use every day.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He got caught with that one.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** He did get caught. The Ontario PCs forced Premier McGuinty to backtrack on some of those items. They're still there, and we will fight his tax increases each and every step of the way.

**1600**

So now what do we see? After swearing not to increase taxes when elected in 2003 and 2007, Ontario families now are faced with increased taxes through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronics taxes, the diamond tax, the hidden hydro tax, higher beer, wine and spirit taxes—the list goes on and on. But even with all the tax increases, even with all the new, hidden Liberal fees, Ontario finds itself with nearly a \$17-billion deficit.

Let me put our deficit and debt problem into perspective. It took 23 Premiers 136 years to accumulate Ontario's first \$148 billion in debt, and the McGuinty Liberals will single-handedly double that debt in their eight years in office. Do you know what that means?



They're passing that burden on to our children, on to our grandchildren.

What do we see today? Before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Premier McGuinty are making promises all over again. They're promising they're not going to increase taxes; they're promising they're not going to increase the HST. Their new slogan: "The Liberals won't raise taxes; this time we really, really, really, really mean it."

Ontario families don't want pledges; they don't want promises. They don't want them from the Liberals because they believe that Premier McGuinty simply will not keep his word.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They want relief.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** They want relief, and they want a guarantee. When it comes to taxes, there is only one guarantee that Premier McGuinty will give them: He will raise their taxes. He can't help it. It's what he always does. But, friends, the Ontario PCs have a different approach: We will not.

Instead of raising taxes for most while lavishing special breaks for the favoured few, the Ontario PCs will offer a plan to cut taxes for families right across the board. Instead of runaway spending and secret side deals with the big public sector unions that they try to hide until after the election, jeopardizing government services for future generations, an Ontario PC government will make government live within its means. Instead of more bureaucracy, more red tape, more pet projects, we will invest in health care first. Instead of chasing business out of the province, we will invite business in and create an environment that nurtures the businesses born here in Ontario.

It all starts with today's vote. Sadly, today's vote, like Premier McGuinty's pledge, isn't binding. But thankfully, there is a binding vote coming up, and it's on October 6. Ontario families know the only way to change the way the Premier treats them is to change the government in our province and bring in an Ontario PC government. Those same families—the ones we hear at parks, in grocery store lineups, at our children's hockey and baseball games—know there is only one way to get the Premier to give them the respect they deserve and the relief that they need; they know the only government that can give them tax relief, a chance to catch up, is an Ontario PC government. That's why, when votes really count, on October 6, Ontario families will vote for change.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** This is an interesting motion from the member from the Conservative caucus, Ms. MacLeod. I simply want to focus on a couple of areas of it.

First, I want to focus on the HST. Second, as mentioned in the motion, I want to focus on the hidden hydro taxes; and third, as my Conservative colleagues often mention when they refer to smart meters as tax meters, I want to deal with that for a while.

One of the ways that people across Ontario increasingly discover that they're paying more taxes is when they look at their hydro bill. People have started to ask, "Why is my hydro bill skyrocketing?" I think people deserve an answer, because over the past six or seven years you've watched your hydro bill skyrocket. Many people have seen hydro bill increases of \$125 a month or \$1,500 a year. Imagine a tax increase of \$1,500 a year. That's what people are experiencing, only it comes on the hydro bill.

Because hydroelectricity is a necessity for us to live, people deserve to know what is going on and what can be done about it. You deserve to know what is going on and what can be done about it.

The first issue to address is the harmonized sales tax, the HST. Adding the HST to our hydro bill caused real pain for all of us, but especially for low- and middle-income families and seniors trying to make ends meet on fixed-income pensions. If your current hydro bill is \$200 per month, with the HST it becomes \$226 a month. This amounts to an extra \$312 a year just on HST. Many people simply do not have the extra \$312 a year for HST on the hydro bill.

What can be done? New Democrats believe we must take the HST off the hydro bill and the heating bill. Necessities of life like electricity and heating for our homes should not be subject to the HST. It is just wrong.

The next issue that I think needs to be addressed the Conservative caucus calls the tax meters—the tax machines. I call them the not-so-smart meters. One of the biggest and costliest mistakes the McGuinty Liberals made was to spend a lot of your money—\$1.5 billion so far—on what Liberals call smart meters.

Well, it turns out they are not-so-smart meters, because tests so far have shown that they do not give accurate readings and don't help people reduce their electricity usage, and they have cost over \$1.5 billion to install, with a cost likely to hit \$2 billion by 2012. You are already paying for the \$1.5 billion on your hydro bill, and you will pay a lot more on your hydro bill before this costly experiment is over.

What can be done? Well, the best way to help people use less energy in their homes is to provide low-interest loans so that we can install high-efficiency fridges, stoves and freezers and then let people pay down the loans by how much we save on our monthly hydro bills. That's exactly what the government of Manitoba does through Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart strategy. I'd urge people to actually go to the Manitoba Hydro website, and they can read about this. It's a strategy that actually helps people use less electricity, thereby saving them money.

One of the ways that people are paying huge taxes on their hydro bill, but it really is hidden, is the privatization of our hydro system that has happened. Ontario's hydro-electricity system used to operate on a not-for-profit basis to provide hydro to people at cost, not cost plus profit plus fee plus commissions, which is what goes on now. Both the former Conservative and the current Liberal governments in Ontario have moved to privatize more



and more of our hydroelectricity system with the result that the cost of the system is skyrocketing.

Just one of these privatized hydro companies racked up profits of \$560 million in 2010, and you pay for the \$560 million in profits on your hydro bill every month. I'm told that the chief executive of that company takes in a total salary and compensation of over \$2 million a year, and you pay for that on your hydro bill now.

1610

But even worse, many of these new private hydro companies under the McGuinty Liberals' bizarre hydro-electricity scheme have been paid hundreds of millions of dollars for electricity that wasn't delivered to you, the consumer. Some other private hydro companies were paid \$146 million for electricity that was purchased in the United States but not delivered to consumers in Ontario.

Altogether, \$360 million of your money was paid out to private hydro companies for electricity that was not delivered to you, the hydro consumer. Now that's what I call a very effective tax: \$360 million, and the people who paid it got nothing for it. You paid that \$360 million on your hydro bill even though you got nothing for it.

What can be done? Both Manitoba and Quebec have rejected the privatized hydro scheme that the Conservatives and Liberals have foisted on the people of Ontario. In these provinces, hydro bills are a lot more affordable and private hydro companies aren't paid millions of dollars for electricity that is never delivered to you, the consumer. We in Ontario should reject the privatized hydro scheme too. If people in Manitoba and Quebec can have not-for-profit hydro systems that deliver electricity at cost without all the fees, commissions, profits and hidden taxes attached, we can do it in Ontario too.

Something else has happened under both the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals. It's what I call an "exploding bureaucracy." Along with the privatization of our hydroelectricity system came an explosion of new bureaucracies. There was one provider of electricity in Ontario 10 years ago: Ontario Hydro. The former Conservative government and now the McGuinty Liberals have created—get this—eight bureaucracies and several private companies, and those bureaucracies and private companies have budgets in the billions of dollars, which you pay for on your monthly hydro bill.

I just want to name these new bureaucracies: (1) Ontario Power Generation; (2) Hydro One; (3) the Independent Electricity System Operator; (4) the Ontario Energy Board; (5) the Ontario Power Authority; (6) the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.; (7) the Electrical Safety Authority; and (8) the smart meter entity.

Imagine this for a minute: Other provinces, Manitoba and Quebec, deliver electricity at cost to industry, businesses and homes, and they have at most two organizations. In Manitoba you have Manitoba Hydro, which produces and delivers the electricity, and you have the Manitoba public utilities commission, which makes sure that Manitoba Hydro is following the rules. In Ontario, though, the Conservatives and the Liberals have left us with eight bureaucracies, and these bureaucracies all have budgets in the billions of dollars.

I would simply say, "What can be done?" Well, Manitoba has one company which generates and distributes electricity, Manitoba Hydro, and one body that holds them accountable, the Manitoba public utilities commission. If Manitoba can run their hydroelectricity system with only two organizations, why does Ontario have eight different bloated bureaucracies?

But the bureaucracies aren't alone. With them came exploding executive salaries. Not only have the McGuinty Liberals and the Conservatives before them created the huge new bureaucracies, they have created huge salaries and bonuses for the executives at the top as well. As a comparison, the head of Manitoba Hydro, which provides electricity to all of Manitoba on a not-for-profit basis, gets paid \$375,000 annually. Now, if you add up the eight bureaucracies in Ontario and then add up the executive salaries: at Ontario Power Generation, the top five executives get paid \$4-million-plus; at Hydro One, the top six executives, \$3-million-plus; the Ontario Power Authority top five executives, \$2 million; the Independent Electricity System Operator top six executives, \$2.5 million; the Ontario Energy Board top eight executives, \$2 million; the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., the chief executive officer is at \$560,000; and so far the government refuses to tell us how much the head of the so-called smart meter entity is paid. But if you just add up the numbers I've given you so far, you pay, for all these exploding executive salaries, on your monthly hydro bill more than \$14 million. That's what the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals have given us. That's the public hydro bureaucracy. If you then add up what the chief executive officers and other executive folks in the private hydro companies are getting paid, I have no doubt it's probably another \$14 million.

Boy, this is a really effective tax machine that's going on, using Ontario's hydro system to siphon money away from ordinary people into the pockets of executives with bloated salaries and bloated compensation packages.

What can be done? Well, I simply say that if Manitoba can pay the head of Manitoba Hydro \$375,000 annually, why are we paying over \$14 million annually to the executives of the bloated hydro bureaucracies in Ontario?

One of the hidden taxes in all of this system are the lucrative subsidies for green energy. We all agree that it is good for the environment to generate more of our electricity from natural resources like water power, wind power and solar power, but the reality is, the McGuinty Liberals are following a very expensive path of private wind power, private solar power and increasingly private water power, and so far, we can calculate that this will add over \$500 million a year to the cost of hydro-electricity in Ontario.

Now, in contrast to the McGuinty Liberals, American states are bringing in wind power too, and other provinces, like Manitoba, but at a much lower cost than the McGuinty Liberals in Ontario. Some comparisons: Texas pays six cents a kilowatt hour for wind power and Manitoba pays less than six cents a kilowatt hour for wind power. The McGuinty Liberals in Ontario pay over



13 cents a kilowatt hour for wind power. So the question is, if Texas and Manitoba can develop wind power for six cents a kilowatt hour or less, why are the McGuinty Liberals forcing people to pay over 13 cents a kilowatt hour? My, this is a very effective tax machine indeed.

In this debate, people deserve to know where New Democrats stand, what New Democrats stand for. What I've given you are just five reasons why your hydro bill has skyrocketed over the last six or seven years. There are certainly other factors that are also worthy of discussion, but these five show that there are better hydro-electricity choices and options for the people of Ontario than those the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals offer.

1620

New Democrats believe, for example, that northern Ontario should have its own hydroelectricity company, owned by us—the people—run on a not-for-profit basis, like Manitoba Hydro or Hydro Quebec, and it should generate electricity, it should transmit electricity and it should distribute electricity. It should deliver hydro-electricity at cost to our homes, businesses and industries so that we can sustain good-paying jobs, our communities and our families. If the people of Manitoba and Quebec can do it—and they can—we can too.

I've referenced a lot of reports and a lot of studies in my comments, and sometimes people who are watching want to know where you got this. If people want to know where I got some of the stats and some of the figures, I invite them to get in touch with me or my constituency office, and I'd be happy to provide them with detailed references where they can find this for themselves.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I thank the opposition for bringing this motion forward today. Unfortunately, with only 40 minutes per party to speak to this, we have five or six members who are chomping at the bit to get at this. That leaves me only about eight minutes.

I'm going to do something today that I haven't done hardly at all in the almost eight years that I've been here. Usually, I like to use my words, make my remarks. Rarely do I find a letter that I'll read from when I'm speaking in the Legislature, but I have one here that I'm going to use today. I think it sums up incredibly well—and I'm speaking primarily to my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan, because this letter is written by a northerner and he's speaking about the HST. The opposition day motion today focuses on many things, but primarily on the HST.

It uses language that is not my words. Some of it's a little stronger than I might use, but it's language that is contained in a letter that was published in a periodical. It's from a magazine that's called Northern Ontario Business magazine, and it's written by an economist by the name of David Robinson. He works at the University of Laurentian in Sudbury. He's very interested in northern issues. He speaks about the HST. He wrote this letter about nine months ago. It goes on for a while; I'm going to highlight some of the things he had to say.

"I genuinely like politicians. The ones I know are all smart people with good people skills. Some of them even buy me lunch.

"It bothers me when a politician ... pushes a policy that I know is dumb. I absolutely cringe when the provincial Conservative leader Tim Hudak and provincial NDP leader Andrea Horwath talk about the ... HST.

"As an economist, I know that the HST is a good idea. The ... PST is out of date, costly to operate, badly designed and it penalizes jobs in Ontario....

"Let me be clear about this: The vast majority of economists support combining the federal and provincial sales taxes." To my Conservative friends across the way, as they know, Stephen Harper, who has a majority federally, supports the HST, but maybe they'll explain that to us somewhere along the line.

"How can reorganizing sales taxes make such a difference? The provincial sales tax falls on inputs for businesses as well as sales to consumers." He goes on to explain in detail, but that's not what I'm going to focus on here today.

He says the following: "Their confusion"—he's talking about Hudak and he's talking about Horwath; especially Horwath as someone who likes to think she's the champion of the north—"will hurt northern Ontario. The total value of mining supply and service sector output is \$5.6 billion. There are 500 companies employing 23,000 people.... The HST makes them more competitive. The PST hurts small businesses even more than big ones....

"Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec have already seen the light." In other words, they've been doing this for years.

Then he asks, "So why don't Tim"—he means Hudak—"and Andrea"—he means Horwath—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I want to remind you that you can't say inadvertently what you can't say—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm quoting. I'm quoting, sir.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That doesn't matter. You can't say indirectly what you can't say directly—there's what I was looking for.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I appreciate that. Thank you, Speaker.

He wants to know: Why don't the two leaders of the Conservative Party and the NDP "want to fix the Ontario's lunatic PST? Are they ignorant of the way taxes work? Are they lying to get votes? It is hard to tell. We can be 100% sure that if either of them forms the government, they won't go back to the PST.

"When the NDP fights the HST, they tell themselves they are defending the poor. They are wrong. Canada's best leftist think tank"—leftish, meaning NDP—"is the Centre for Policy Alternatives. It found that the HST reforms will slightly increase the income for the poor." That's a left-leaning think tank. "It will certainly improve their job prospects.

"The part of the NDP message that people will remember is that paying taxes is bad. In her rush to say something that is popular, Horwath is reinforcing—



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I remind the member again to please insert “leader of the third party” or something like that.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** “In her rush to say something that is popular,” the leader of the NDP “is reinforcing the anti-government, anti-tax rhetoric of the Conservatives. She might as well join the Republicans....

“What makes” the Leader of the Opposition’s “position pathetic is that the HST is good for small business.” The Leader of the Opposition “likes small business, doesn’t he?”

This is an interesting conclusion to his letter: “What a strange situation. We have leaders on the left”—the leader of the NDP—“and the right”—the leader of the Conservatives—“promoting the same policies. Both of them are ignoring the advice of professional economists. Neither of them seems to have a clue about how the tax system works. Both of them are undermining northern Ontario’s future for a very few votes in the short run. This is reactionary populism at its worst.

“I said at the beginning that I like politicians. I would like this pair a lot better if they would get a bit of professional advice.”

We know the HST has presented a wonderful political opportunity for the members of both of the opposition parties. The NDP response is predictable, but the Conservative one less so. I would go on to say that their credibility with a lot of their core constituency has been affected by their position on this particular policy, and I think that will bear some fruit as we go forward.

Also, it’s important to mention the federal Conservative government and Prime Minister Harper—they have a majority. They support the HST. They passed legislation federally supporting the HST. They transferred \$4.3 billion to Ontario to help us implement the HST. That’s the federal Conservative government. If there’s anybody who doesn’t like tax increases, I think most people would think it’s Stephen Harper. But he voted on and passed legislation to implement the HST in Ontario and transferred money to allow to us do it.

The Toronto Star, the Toronto Sun, the National Post, the Globe and Mail—they’ve all written editorials supporting the implementation of the HST. The chamber of commerce in my neck of the woods has asked for this to happen for years and years. And here’s the best part: Poverty groups, food banks, seniors’ groups—none of them, not the poverty groups, not the food banks, and not the seniors’ groups, are marching on the front lawns of Queen’s Park opposed to the implementation of the HST, because they know that the full realm, the full breadth of the tax reform policies that we’ve brought in does not adversely affect those groups. They know that.

Four provinces, 130 countries—the member that spoke just before me forgot to mention about the 10% Ontario clean energy benefit as well.

I’ve used probably more of the time than I should. I apologize to my other members for that. My time is up. I think it’s obvious what’s going on here. As was said by the previous speaker, if others want to know where they

can find this letter that I just quoted from, they can contact my constituency office. I’d be happy to share that information with them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I’m pleased to join in the debate on this motion. I want to congratulate the member for Nepean–Carleton, my friend Lisa MacLeod, for putting it forward today. I think this is an extremely timely debate. Our leader, Tim Hudak, who spoke as our leadoff speaker, really touched, I think, the issues here in the province of Ontario. I’m going to use my time to talk about some local examples, but I support this motion and the intent of this motion. Again, I want to applaud my colleague Lisa MacLeod for bringing it forward.

1630

You don’t have to search too many places to find the impact that Dalton McGuinty and this government have placed on Ontarians. You can take a dart and throw it against a map of Ontario, and anywhere it lands you’re going to hear the same feelings I hear in my riding: those concerns about relief. They’re telling our members—they have to be telling the members opposite—that enough is enough; the hits to the pocketbook, whether it be the HST, eco taxes, some of the hidden taxes on hydro bills, the list goes on and on. That’s why I think it’s so important that we’re debating this motion from the member for Nepean–Carleton today.

I realize that we’re asking a leopard to change its spots, and in our case we know that it’s impossible. This Premier is who he is. He and his government are hard-wired to tax and spend; it’s in their DNA. He has ignored our party’s pleas in the past to give Ontario families a break. But maybe, just maybe, he’ll listen to the debate today and recognize that we in the Ontario PC caucus want to give a voice to those Ontario families that are struggling to make ends meet.

What I’m saying, Premier, is do it for them. Stand here and look Ontarians in the eye and tell them you won’t create any new taxes, you won’t spring a carbon tax to them or hike the HST. That’s what we want here. Our leader, Tim Hudak of the PC Party, has pledged to bring relief to the family budget. Why won’t the members on the other side of the House? Why won’t the government stand up? You won’t because I don’t think you can. You just can’t seem to bring your mind to listen, like members of our caucus, to what Ontario families are saying.

In preparing some notes today, I’m reminded of a time when the member from Nepean–Carleton and I met with Sam Crosby-Bouwhuis, who is the owner of the Bread of Life Dance Theatre in Brockville. At the time, she was absorbing a staggering \$1,500 a month for the cost of the HST to prevent passing it on to her 200 students. We heard from the parents that day that they couldn’t believe the government was putting forward this HST and that it was affecting those people.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, mentioned that famous Canada Day last year, when people got the double whammy



of not only the HST but also the eco fees, which were slid under the carpet. My two constituency assistants, Pauline Connolly and Lynn Campbell, worked for my predecessor, now Senator Runciman, for 15 years, and they couldn't imagine the amount of calls. It was by far the busiest day they ever had in a constituency office for complaints because of what this government tried to pull: the double whammy on Canada Day. I'm glad that our leader, Tim Hudak, brought that up.

As well, I introduced my own resolution calling on the McGuinty government to scrap its hidden hydro tax, which the government defeated, and I spoke about Purcell's Freshmart in Mallorytown, owned by Mike and Dana Purcell. They gave me their hydro bill. It was \$4,113.93 a month, but only \$1,158 was actually electricity. All the other money, over \$2,000, was an assortment of fees and taxes, including \$470 in HST. I know that every family business is having difficulty, especially when they have those types of taxes added.

But it's not just businesses. I want to give you one instance of a couple of grandparents raising their two grandchildren in the north Leeds area of my riding. They quote in an email that one summer month they only used \$1.50 of hydro, but their bill was over \$150 because of those extra fees and charges. It's not me saying that; it's not a PC MPP saying that. It's my constituents reading their bills to me.

As well, we talk about the eco fees. I'm reminded of an email I received from John Loscher and Diane Griffin of Brockville, who wrote to tell me about their experience with the eco tax. They just did like most Ontarians. They went to a store, purchased a can of paint like every other Ontarian, and they had to dig a little deeper because of the eco tax. But guess what? When they went to return that unused paint can back to Stewardship Ontario, they hadn't yet set up a recycling program in Brockville. Unbelievable. More money out of their pockets; nothing back for them in return.

So I'm proud to speak on this bill today, I'm proud to support this, and in the few moments as I wrap up, I think what we're not looking for, as our leader said, is another meaningless pledge by this Premier that, "We really, really mean it this time. We're not going to raise your taxes." People deserve better, and I think that's why we in the PC Party know that families need the relief, and we're quite prepared to do it now, and we're quite prepared to do it on October 6 as well.

Our fundamental principle is to respect hard-working Ontario families by lowering taxes and being accountable for every penny of their taxes we spend as a government. So I'm pleased to join in the debate in the few moments that I have, pleased to be able to provide some comments, and I hope that all members opposite will think long and hard before they vote on this motion today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's good to have the opportunity to speak to the motion made by the member from Nepean. I've got to tell you, just when you think you're making friends—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Come on, Rosie. Come on.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Because we've been making friends for such a long time in the last many, many years, and then you introduce bills like this and you begin to sever our relationship. And it feels bad, I have to say. Then I have to tell the real story.

I want to say to the Tories that you guys have a lot of good friends on the other side. You shouldn't beat them up so much. You are so close, you dare not say it out loud. In fact, the Liberals tried desperately to prove, by any kind of evidence, whether it's factually based or not, that they are different from you, and of course, you want to do the same with motions like this to show how different you are from them. But really, you are so close, so close that it's just hard to separate you, really.

How do I know this? There are a couple of examples, and I think of Mr. Harper and Mr. McGuinty on this HST. You've got to love them, right? Now, I know you're a different party provincially; I understand; you're independent, even. I know that from time to time you have different political ideas, particularly on the HST. But Conservatives on the whole, I would say, including your former leader, Mr. Tory—whom most of you have disowned, I understand; it appears, but I could be wrong—and Mr. Harper and the Minister of Finance federally, seem to like the HST, because they think as Conservatives. They make the argument that introducing the HST, the harmonized sales tax, is good for business.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** He was here.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Oh, yeah. They've all been around. And on the HST, the Liberals and the federal Conservatives—and there are no exceptions that I'm aware of—have joined hands strongly. It's hard to deny because it has happened. So rather than denying it so strongly, embrace it and say, "We are like Tories. We think like Tories. We believe in the same ideas." Say it with feeling, but don't pretend you're different, for God's sake. It's a bit annoying when you do that. I just thought I would point it out. If you think I'm wrong, please say it in the next round.

1640

On the corporate tax cuts, you guys are very similar. I don't know whether you want to admit this or not, but Liberals, you've been cutting corporate taxes, have you not? Yes, yes.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Personal income tax.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Even, yes. You're so proud of cutting income taxes, too. And the Tories are fond of the same thing, are they not?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, no. Listen carefully. Do you remember when Mike Harris was in power? He cut corporate taxes a lot. Remember? Okay. They did it, and Tim was there, but he was—I know who's got the power. It doesn't really matter. I don't blame Tim; it's not his problem. But on the whole issue of corporate taxes and cutting corporate taxes, they did it and you're doing it. You're saying that they did it a lot and you're doing it less. But combined, together, you have been cutting



corporate taxes as if it were a feast, as if you enjoy it. With due respect, of course, some of you haven't looked at the facts around this whole issue, because both of you claim that reducing tax cuts is good for the economy and is good for jobs. Is that not correct? Is that not correct, John?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I understand that. I just want you to nod your head if what I'm saying is correct, because I don't want to say any untruths; I want to state the facts.

We say that you two political entities are very much the same and in sync with each other. Would that some of you from time to time admit that. It's just that you struggle so much to say, "Oh no, they're different," and "Oh no, Liberals are different." But my point is that when you cut corporate taxes—they've done it since 1995, God bless them, and you continue doing it in your term, God bless—it means you don't have as much money left in the till to be able to do the things you want to do in education and health care, which, by the way, is where you claim you made extraordinary historical differences. How do you do that with less money?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, no. The HST just came into play. You've been cutting corporate taxes before this, and they've been cutting them for a long time, but you claim that even though they cut corporate taxes and income tax and you don't have that same level of funding that you might have a long time ago, you've been able to do extraordinary things since you've been in power, even though you still have a \$17-billion deficit. Even though you lowered income taxes, you still claim you're able to do so much more, and all I want to say is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No. They say you want to raise taxes.

But the point is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They say you want to raise taxes.

But here's the point—because we've said it: We said we would eliminate those corporate tax cuts, absolutely. We make no bones about that. We've been very clear. And you know why, John.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Why?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We need the money. We need the pecunia to do all the good thing that you want to do—where you say you're leading on education and health care with less money yet. You guys are able to do incredible alchemy; you're able to do so much, unlike ever before, with so little in the till. How you do that, I don't get it. You guys are good. In fact, I often say that some of you are really, really good to be able to have this rare ability to accomplish something that, in my mind, is extraordinarily difficult without money. How can you do it without money? Will you just simply say it and it comes true? Liberals, you guys are so, so good that you're able to make it happen. I've got to hand it to you guys. You guys are really, really good.

I want to show you something—not show you, because I can't. I want to just quote something. We have recently seen some data from Stats Canada—which Liberals like; I know you guys respect Stats Canada—which, along with a number of other reports, suggest that there is little connection between lower corporate taxes and new job-creating investments. I don't know whether some of you have had the chance to see this, but you might want to read it, because it will be instructive in terms of the claims you make, the claims these fine Tories make, versus the facts that Stats Canada makes reference to. Since 1999, Ontario has provided more than \$20 billion in corporate tax cuts, without the job growth and economic growth predicted by business groups and, dare I say, conservative economists, sometimes referred to as right-wing.

Economists prefer—some of the ones whom I respect, at least—direct public investment in education and research, and the renewal of infrastructure as more effective than the HST and broad-based corporate tax cuts in boosting productivity, stimulating economic growth and creating jobs.

I know that the corporate sector doesn't like to hear that, because they like the money. They like the corporate tax cuts. They like to take from—I was about to say "us" but I make more than 90% of the population, which makes less than I do. They like to take from the 90% of the public that earns so very little so they can have more by way of cash money—profits—and do not produce the promised jobs that they told you they would produce—that you claimed, as Liberals and Tories, you would produce. The facts say that the money that we give them, that we steal from those who are poorer than us, is not producing the jobs that the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan says we're producing by way of the corporate tax cuts and by way of the HST. They're not being produced.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Now, John—Giovanni, in Italian—I want to say that I was referring to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't want to feel left out of this conversation now—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're quite right.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** —so please direct it through the Chair.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're part of this; don't you worry. I include all of you, whether you're there or there. And by the way, I'm including them too, even though I don't see them as well.

I was referring to Stats Canada. I don't make these things up.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Okay. Let me get to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Let's get back to the debate.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Let me get to that one, because I think that you will be surprised, Minister of the Environment, with some of these other stats that I will refer to. And you know, Minister of the Environment,



that a whole lot of people are squeezed today, more than ever. They've got tremendous debt, you will admit. They can barely pay the bills on hydro. They can barely pay the gas bills at the pump. They can barely pay the increased insurance rates that they're getting. Home heating is really becoming a weight for a whole lot of people who earn modest incomes. You know they're hurting.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Just a couple of more things.

Corporate profits increased 7.9% last quarter to \$66 million.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Thank God.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** "Thank God," you say, Minister. You're quite right. And that's good news for the CEOs who earn good dollars and the shareholders. Those who have a whole lot of money are doing well.

But it raises serious questions about the economic usefulness of McGuinty's multi-billion-dollar corporate tax cuts, because Ontario's record on post-recession job creation is not as strong as that of other provinces, like Manitoba, that have put a pause on further corporate tax cuts while their provincial budgets are in deficit. Ontario remains nearly 16,000 jobs below its pre-recession peak, while Manitoba has gained 15,000 jobs since the date the recession took hold.

1650

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You've got to look at these numbers, Minister of the Environment. If you don't do that, you're not being fair to yourself and to the people you represent. If the money didn't go to create the jobs, where did it go, Giovanni? The attached table tells the story. Profits have increased significantly, CEOs have been awarded significant compensation increases, dividends for shareholders have been boosted, God bless, but the hiring spree has not materialized, Giovanni.

Here's the latest quarterly summary of the province of Ontario's big eight financial institutions: Scotiabank, quarterly profit, \$1.2 billion, CEO pay, \$10.6 million, up 10%; Royal Bank, \$1.8 billion in quarterly profit, \$11 million in CEO pay, God bless, up 6%; TD Bank, \$1.5 billion in profits and \$11.3 million in salaries, God bless; Bank of Montreal, \$776-million profit and CEO pay of \$9.5 million. You get the point, right? It's a long list. You might have seen it; I don't know.

I wanted to share some numbers with you just to tell you that when you give those corporate tax cuts, some of these fine institutions I alluded to—CIBC, Sun Life, Manulife and Great-West Life, God bless—are doing well with their money, they're doing really well, and they're taking a whole lot of cash to go with that; it's cash money just put on the side for a rainy day. And that hiring spree is not materializing, Giovanni; it's not there.

Here's what another economist has to say. Economist Toby Sanger has analyzed how corporate tax reductions are distributed in the population, and has found that the effect is profoundly regressive. In his presentation to the standing committee, he also noted that it's households, not the corporate sector, suffering from a financial crunch:

"Despite record corporate profits, rates of business investment and productivity have been largely stagnant in Ontario and in Canada during the past decade." That's under your rule and the Tories.

"There's a lot of focus on public deficits, but it's also important to look at the deficits of the household sector and the balances of the corporate sector. There's a complete reversal in this about 10 years ago. Low wage growth and rising housing prices led to massive and unprecedented deficits for households, starting about a decade ago. Meanwhile high corporate profits, cuts in business and corporate taxes, and low business investment led to unprecedented corporate surpluses.... A lot of the excess profits went into financial speculative investments, mergers and acquisitions, share buybacks and major excess cash reserves....

"As we all know now, the debt of Canadian households has steadily increased and is now at a record rate of personal disposable income. By some measures, these are higher than rates in the United States....

"Meanwhile, corporate debt ratios have kept on falling, even right through the recession. So once again, the corporate sector has great balance sheets and often lots of excess cash, but they aren't investing in the economy."

That's why we've been saying to you Liberals and Tories that you can't just give our money away to the corporations, to the financial institutions. You just can't do that. We need that money. Our government—yours, while you're in charge—needs that money so that we could be sure the money is there for long-term care, for seniors who desperately need home care as you urge them to stay at home, as you kick them out of hospitals and threaten to have them pay a fee unless they leave as quickly as possible. You need the money. You can't just give it away, Giovanni. We need to hold on to it, and both you and the Tories have been doing the same for the last—good God—15 years. Since 2000, the combined federal-Ontario corporate tax rate will have been reduced from 44% to 25%, yet business investment has deteriorated since then. In fact, rather than investing in productivity, i.e., machinery and equipment and creating jobs, corporations have been accumulating cash and similar liquid assets at an increasing rate. According to Stats Canada, corporate holdings of cash and similar assets reached nearly half a trillion dollars by the third quarter of 2010. Since the beginning of the recession, businesses added \$83 billion to cash holdings.

No-strings-attached corporate tax cuts will only boost already astronomical cash levels. We need to find a different way to do business around here. We need to make sure that we make life affordable to the majority of working men and women in Ontario. Both Liberals and Tories: You have not been doing that. Your corporate taxes and your high, deregulated, privatized hydro rates are killing everyone. As Paul Kahnert from the Ontario Electricity Coalition—the former chair—said: "The real reason for hydro bill shock is the addition of profits to generators, profits to distributors, profits to retailers,



dividends to investors, commissions to commodities brokers and smart meter charges. The creation of the Ontario Energy Board, the Ontario Power Authority, the Independent Electricity System Operator ... is also to blame. Smart meters and time-of-use pricing is just a cover for a massive rate hike and is the means to funnel profits into all these organizations.

"Tim Hudak's Conservative Party brought in deregulation and privatization under ... Harris. McGuinty's Liberals kept most of the Conservatives' legislation," killing most Ontarians and just pushing a lot of industry out of this province, sending them to Manitoba and Quebec. You guys are killing us. You guys are killing jobs. Both the Tories and yourselves are so close, and you dare not say how close you are, but between the two of you, you're killing jobs. While we agree with the Tories that the HST is harmful, particularly to those who are middle income, we disagree with Tories on how wrong it is and why it's wrong. We can't support this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I just want to take a moment to remind members that the Ontario Legislature internship program reception is going on in rooms 228 and 230. We encourage you to support the interns.

Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to stand up and speak against this motion for many different reasons, because whatever it says in this motion was the opposite way. I'll give you an example: They say that it's a higher personal tax. As a matter of fact, our personal tax went down, and the average Ontarian receives \$355 per year. Also, 90,000 low-income Ontarians now no longer pay a personal income tax. Nine out of 10 taxpayers are now paying less income tax. So whatever was being said there was incorrect.

Also, we're talking about corporate tax. I love the member from Trinity-Spadina when he talks about the corporate tax. As our Minister of the Environment mentioned, we do it, but in moderation, to attract more companies to come to Ontario. I had the chance to attend a meeting in my riding of London-Fanshawe. There's a huge company coming to London. The first thing they ask us is, "The corporate tax: How much would it be in Ontario? How much is the municipal tax?" Do we have a sustainable hydro supply system? Do we have a water supply system? Do we have a place they can build on? When a company comes, first they read—taxation, hydro supply, water supply—all the necessities, and the skilled workers—if they're able to work in the province of Ontario.

The opposition party mentioned the electronic fee and the eco fee and all these fees. I want to say that those are not taxes, to start with, because when you say "taxes," it means the government collects the money and it goes back to the coffers of the government. It's not true, because it's a fee to manage the electronic waste, which I support. This law was introduced, passed and implemented by the Conservative Party in 2002, which we support. I think it's our obligation not to allow electronic

waste, hazardous waste, to go to landfills. It has to be managed in a certain way. That's why the fee was implemented: to manage those hazardous wastes.

1700

We talked about many different things. We talked about hydro. I'm proud to be a part of a government who introduced a Green Energy Act.

Last Friday, in my riding of London-Fanshawe, a company called Kaco—it's a German solar company—came to announce the opening of a production facility in London, Ontario. This facility will build an inverter to convert solar energy to electricity. The president of that company said, "I'm delighted to be here in Ontario. I'm delighted to be in London. I wish Ontario had that law, that Green Energy Act, longer than two years, because I went and opened a head office in Los Angeles, in the United States. But now I'm seriously thinking of moving to Ontario" because we have better laws in Ontario. We encourage companies to produce solar systems, windmills and many different ways to produce green energy in the province of Ontario.

So all these elements are convincing many different companies, many different factories, to come to Ontario and open because we have all the elements and all the infrastructure they need. We have the good taxation system. We have a skilled workforce in the province of Ontario. We have the acts to allow them to open factories and companies in the province of Ontario. All those elements exist in Ontario.

When we started talking about HST, I was one of the people who was concerned. But as a matter of fact, when I heard what the HST can do for small business people, what money it can save them, how many companies, because of the HST, are coming to Ontario and opening—Mr. Speaker, I have a brother. He is a small business owner in the city of London. You know what? I went and asked him, "What do you think about the HST?" He said, "I was scared at the beginning. I was scared. But do you know what happened? After the implementation, I think I'm saving more money than before because there were so many different things I wasn't able to claim in the past that I can now claim." Instead of filing two taxes, PST and GST, now we're filing one tax, which saves the business community more than \$500 million a year. It's a lot of money, and also it's an incentive for them, to help them out.

The member from the third party mentioned hydro. He talked a lot about hydro, and he speaks all the time about it. As a matter of fact, when the people across Ontario receive a 10% discount on their bill, I think that's an incredible achievement to support the people of Ontario. When the low-income and seniors get another incentive to support them in difficult times, it's a great achievement, because we think about all the segments of our society. We think about low-income, seniors, the business community, about low and high income; all together, they create Ontario. Ontario cannot run by itself. Ontario is comprised of many people: business people, low-income people, vulnerable, strong, able, disabled.



All of us have to work together to maintain the economy in the province of Ontario.

As I mentioned, I look at the motion brought by the member from Nepean—Carleton and I see that whatever she said was totally the opposite. Higher personal tax: As a matter of fact, Ontario has lower personal taxes. Corporate tax: Of course, the corporations have lower taxes than before. Also, the fee she was talking about as a tax is not correct. It's a fee managed by Stewardship Ontario, which was introduced by the Conservatives, which we maintain because we think it's the right thing to do. All that's being done and said in this motion does not reflect the reality of the circumstances in the province of Ontario.

So I see a lot of companies coming to Ontario as a result of the HST, as a result of the harmonization of the taxation, because they can save more money and they can open more, and small businesses can claim something they never thought they could claim. If you have a coffee shop, for instance, all the paper cups, paper, detergent materials, all the stuff you use in order to serve the coffee—you couldn't claim the PST before. Now you can claim it. You can save more money. You can pass on the savings to your customers, the consumers.

As a matter of fact, many small businesses who were scared before now think it's important for them to keep the HST, because it's fewer headaches, less bureaucracy, and it saves them a lot of money. In the meantime, as my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan mentioned a few minutes ago, all the experts in the province of Ontario, all the economists have said and are saying that the HST is an incredible achievement. It's something we cannot afford to lose.

Also, I was surprised when the opposition parties talked about the HST as something strange. As a matter of fact, in many different provinces across Canada they've had the HST for many years. Also, the leader of the federal government, a Conservative, who's the Prime Minister of Canada right now, and his finance minister are great supporters of the HST. So I don't understand why the conflict, why the confusion between what's going on in Ottawa and what goes on in this place.

It's important to support our movement as a government and also not to support this motion—because I'm not supporting it for whatever I said at the beginning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Let me start by reading a quote: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and will not run deficits. I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act." Dalton McGuinty's taxpayer protection pledge, signed on September 11, 2003.

Well, isn't it a sad day in this province when we're here to call the government to account and remind them

about the broken promises? As my colleagues have already mentioned, the Premier doesn't exactly have a good record when it comes to making promises and keeping those promises. This is a Premier who waited not even a year after being elected in 2003 to implement the Ontario health tax, which is collected through Ontarians' personal income tax returns. Not only did Mr. McGuinty retract his commitment to not raise taxes, but he also tried to fool Ontarians by indicating that the tax was really a fee, not a tax, and would go completely towards health care.

We know that that isn't the case. Today, all we know is that the so-called health tax goes into the general revenue fund. This government refuses to show where that money goes from there, and they have yet to put the collected health taxes into a separate fund whereby Ontarians can really track where this money is going.

Let me refresh everyone's memory. Although the McGuinty government stretched the truth to give the appearance that every dollar raised by the health tax would be spent on health care, the health tax was spent on programs, including sewer projects and Ministry of Tourism and recreation ads to encourage exercise. Since being called out on this embarrassing claim, the government no longer lists specific programs that benefit from the health tax.

This is a clear admission that every cent of the so-called health tax is most certainly not being spent on health care. If this government had nothing to hide, the so-called health tax wouldn't be going to the general revenue fund; it would be going to a separate fund where Ontario families could see exactly where their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

That was Mr. McGuinty's 2003 broken promise. So let's move ahead to the 2007 election, where we heard no mention of the Premier's plan to implement HST. There was nothing in the platform. The HST has added an additional 8%, and this is charged to 17% of items that were never charged before. This has been particularly difficult for some of the most vulnerable citizens, like seniors on a fixed income. They are being charged an additional 8% on services like snow removal, landscaping, hydro, purchase of vitamins, personal services, and this list goes on.

In addition, Ontarians across the province are watching their hydro bills slowly but surely escalate, and that's thanks to this government's failed energy experiments.

**1710**

The HST bill was a bill that the McGuinty Liberals rushed through the Legislature with minimal debate and without the opportunity for province-wide public consultation and review. I've said it before, and I'm going say it again right now: I found this absolutely appalling, and totally disrespectful of the Ontario families that are paying the bill. This is a government that likes to boast about being transparent, and then time and time again, they push through their secret deals, energy experiments and tax increases with as little input of information and as little input from the public as possible.



The HST wasn't the only increase on July 1, 2010. The government also slipped in their secret eco tax. That happened on July 1 also. The implementation of the program was an abject failure. It was such a disaster, in fact, that the McGuinty Liberals had to backtrack and cancel it within weeks of the initial implementation. This Premier actually thought that he could sneak in an eco tax without Ontario families noticing. However, the plan drastically backfired when some manufacturers chose to pass on the cost of doing business to the consumers, identifying the cost as a separate eco fee. Shockingly, a leaked cabinet document documented that the Premier's colleagues warned him as early as 2008 that this tax scheme would lead to higher taxes and public backlash.

Well, that didn't stop him. In March, we saw this government's final budget, a budget that shows almost \$17 billion in deficit and an astronomical \$257-billion debt. We ask ourselves: With all this additional revenue that the government has collected, why are we still swimming in a sea of red? I'll tell you what it's called. It's called a serious spending problem. For the past eight years, we have seen Mr. McGuinty increase government spending by 70%—70%—at a time when the Ontario economy only grew by 9%. It doesn't take a mathematician to see that this is unsustainable.

Even when the McGuinty government's record-breaking tax increases—like the HST, which was the largest sales tax increase in the history of our province, and the Ontario health tax, the largest personal income tax increase in our history—brought in billions of additional revenue, we're still swimming deep in deficit and debt. So today we're calling on the Premier not to create any more new taxes. To be clear to the members opposite, that includes no new carbon tax and no hike in the HST.

Ontario families have had enough. They cannot keep up with this government's constant cost increases. Ontario families deserve better. They deserve to work hard and to see the results at the end of the day, not to feel like they're working harder than ever and writing bigger and bigger cheques to Premier McGuinty.

I strongly encourage the members opposite to listen carefully today to what we are saying in this opposition day motion. We have listened to Ontario families. We have listened to their message, and their message is clear. "No more taxes. Give us some relief," is what they are saying. It would behoove the Premier and his members to listen the same.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to be able to join in this afternoon's debate. I'm sort of checking the clock. I know there are a number of members who would like the opportunity, so I just want to make sure I don't over-extend my stay on my feet.

This may be among the last opportunities I'm going to have, after having served 29 years in elected office, eight of those years here and 21 years at the municipal level, so I want to use the bit of time really to talk about what I see

my constituents being able to value in the investment they make in their governments.

Now, I can appreciate and understand the other side. I can appreciate the official opposition's position that they don't like diamond taxes, because they don't think that mining should be taxed when it's making many, many billions of dollars out of our resources. And I can appreciate the fact that they don't like corporate taxes, because they think that corporate taxes should be still lower and lower. And I can appreciate that they don't like personal taxes or income taxes or payroll taxes. They'll make a long litany of taxes they don't like, and there's a constituency that will agree with them.

My constituency is somewhat different. You know, I can play to, "I don't like income tax," or "I don't like a tax on the alcohol I buy." But the reality is that my constituents understand that there's a cost to a civil society and a cost to the services we have in our community. I want to speak to some of those services in my community, my riding, and the services abutting my riding, that serve the 130,000 or so people I have the honour to represent. The things we do in our constituency do cost money.

The Rouge Valley Health System Ajax and Pickering site was approved for redevelopment, and it wasn't all that long ago that we opened the new emergency centre, with hundreds of people there using and appreciating the investment we made in health care in our local community. They appreciate the long-term and complex care beds that exist at that site. They appreciate and use the new birthing centre at the Centenary site of the Rouge Valley Health System.

Many of my constituents will get cancer treatment at the McLaughlin cancer care centre in Oshawa, which is part of the Lakeridge Health system. That centre didn't exist eight years ago. It's there now, and my constituents who need it are getting cancer treatment closer to home. My constituents who need dialysis will appreciate the fact that we have reopened the Whitby hospital just recently, and that hospital is providing a considerable amount of care for dialysis patients.

My constituents will also appreciate the opportunity that young people have in our communities to go to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I give credit to the former government—the members opposite—because they started that university. The reality is, though, that we have enhanced investment in post-secondary education, and in that university in particular. I'm going to be there in the not-too-distant future, next month, and have the opportunity to participate in the official opening of the Automotive Centre of Excellence at that university.

The University of Toronto Scarborough campus has a brand new academic building about to open, the largest facility at that campus since 1967. Hundreds, thousands, and over the years, tens of thousands of students from my riding will have the opportunity to attend that university campus—young people in my riding. Their parents are looking forward to the opportunity of their children



having the quality of education they might otherwise have to travel for.

When the Pan Am Games arrive here in 2015, there's going to be a brand new aquatics facility at that campus. It's going to be state of the art, and it's going to be there for generations to come.

Those are investments we're making not only today but for our children and our grandchildren. As an elected representative in this place, having served in elected office for 29 years, I'm proud of those investments. And if those investments mean that I have to pay a tax on the bottle of wine I buy, or a mining company has to pay a tax on the diamonds they take out of the ground, or a corporation has to pay taxes on the profits they're making, or I have to pay a tax on the income I earn, I accept and am proud of that fact because of what we're providing in our community.

1720

Durham College in Whitby and Centennial College in Scarborough have new additions to the facilities. I can drive along the 401 and I can see the new library going up at Centennial College. I drive the 401 through Whitby and into Oshawa and I can see the growth in Durham College and those communities.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in the ribbon-cutting for a newly rebuilt, expanded, enhanced and current GO Transit station in our community. As I drive along the 401 right now through the riding, I'll see signs that are up on the highway: "Construction occurring one kilometre ahead," and there's a new pedestrian bridge connecting the city of Pickering's Town Centre with the GO station, the first of its kind along the 401 and the GO system.

I'm proud of the fact that young people, those entering into their early learning kindergarten years, can attend school full day to give them the best start possible in their education. These things don't happen without public investments of a variety of sorts. You haven't heard much in this place in the last few days about the Ontario child benefit. All of those families in Ontario on modest incomes now have \$1,100 per year per child to help them raise those children, to provide them with the quality of life that they should have. It's the cost of a civil and progressive society.

I'm just going to end by speaking very briefly to Grandview Children's Centre. Grandview Children's Centre exists in Oshawa. It's one of a number of children's treatment centres across Ontario. We made significant investments in those on an annual basis. A couple of years ago, a couple of budgets back, there was an infusion in one budget year of over \$10 million to those centres, and I can tell you that the staff and the families and the children in those centres are benefiting from that type of investment. I want to see Grandview Children's Centre grow. I want to see them have the opportunity to relocate into a new facility that they've been planning for a number of years, when the resources are available to them. But unless we treat our responsibility as one to ensure that we find the resources and

allocate the resources to priorities that are important, those things aren't going to happen.

I'm not going to be supporting this motion. I don't think that income taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that corporate taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that sin taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that diamond taxes are a bad thing. There has to be a balance, but I don't agree with the opposition. I don't agree that our focus should be on driving down taxation to the lowest common denominator. That can only do one thing in the end, and that's hurt the quality of public services and the very people I've had the honour and privilege to represent in this place for eight years and in elected office for 29 years.

I'm hoping that the member, whoever it may be, who succeeds me in a subsequent government to this current Parliament will continue to make the investments that will make my community the kind of place it is today and will continue to have it grow in a progressive fashion and respect the fact that we want to develop the best possible environment for our children and our grandchildren in this province and will continue to support a civil society here in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I get the very strong impression that people in Ontario are beginning to understand a number of things. It has been eight years now of this present government and, given the track record, people do understand that Mr. McGuinty is not to be trusted when it comes to promises of no new taxes, promises of no tax increases. Given that kind of track record, they have come to realize that Mr. McGuinty, as well, is not to be believed when it comes to these kinds of promises: the promises about no new taxes, the promises about no increases in taxes.

Again, what are people to believe? We all recall the taxpayer protection pledge. Mr. McGuinty signed that pledge with great fanfare and then tore it up as soon as he could. Again, putting a signature on something like that—it turns out it really wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

Of course, we all remember what appeared to be a heartfelt television commercial—this would be, what, at least eight years ago—where the present Premier shilled for votes by saying, "I won't cut your taxes, but I won't raise them either."

For these reasons, that's why two weeks ago I called out the Premier for promising, in his first election, no new taxes and then bringing in the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario.

Look at the last election. The Premier, on your behalf, people sitting across the aisle here, in the last election—again, a promise of no new taxes. He brought in the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** HST.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** My prediction—again, as Mr. Yakabuski has indicated, the HST. The people opposite



are going to try and win this coming election. Dalton McGuinty is promising no new taxes, promising not to raise taxes. I predict a three-peat.

Now, it really seems clear to me as well that if the fellows and gals opposite were able to convince the electorate that they really mean it this time—no new taxes—they could turn around, for example, and come up with something brand new, like a carbon tax. That could occur as quickly as you could say Stéphane Dion.

I think I'll send out a Twitter later this afternoon. I was just saying, I think to Mr. Yakabuski, that it costs me about \$40 to fill up my truck, but that's just the tax. I wonder what McGuinty's carbon tax is going to cost me. I know that at least one member opposite has mused about a carbon tax.

For some of his failures, even Michael Ignatieff understood, and I'll quote Iggy: "You can't win elections if you're adding to the input costs of a farmer putting diesel into his tractor or you're adding to the input costs of a fisherman putting diesel into his fishing boat or a trucker transporting goods." Now, Mr. Ignatieff may not be an expert on winning elections, given the recent history, but he does understand that hard-working families—and how many times did he cross the dominion of Canada?—are in no mood to be paying out more of their already dwindling resources.

He also stated, "We took the carbon tax to the public and the public didn't think it was such a good idea.... I'm trying to get myself elected here and if the public, after mature consideration think that's the dumbest thing they've ever heard then I've got to listen." That comes from Iggy. Again, is this government listening to that kind of an argument?

Of course, a carbon tax would obviously add to the projected costs of the present government policy with respect to cap and trade. That was only, what, a little over a year ago. We remember cap and trade. It was odd. It was a local, a provincial response to a global issue. It was legislation that quickly earned the moniker "cap and trade jobs to China."

We recall the green headlines, the fanfare, that did accompany the signing of the cap and trade legislation and the signing of the WCI, the Western Climate Initiative, the trading agreement with certain states and provinces. I've noticed that this province isn't signing any agreements with Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania or Illinois, some of the larger industrial states—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Ohio.

1730

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Ohio, if I didn't mention Ohio.

I still continue to get a blank stare when I say to people that Ontario has signed a cap-and-trade for carbon dioxide with Utah. Now, many people find that confusing, to hear the words "Utah" and "climate change" in the same sentence, and they indicate to me—I had this said once: "Well, signing this kind of an agreement around carbon dioxide emissions with Utah makes about as much sense as signing an agreement with Arizona." Then

I have to explain to them that, well, McGuinty signed an agreement with Arizona as well.

So, despite pushing the ill-conceived cap-and-trade bill that went through the Legislature in 2009, we now hear that Ontario has signalled that it would not meet the January 1 Western Climate Initiative start-up date. I'm sure that Arnold is a little disappointed in Dalton over that one, and we've got some chatter from the environment minister trying to justify that one.

The Minister of Research and Innovation is here today. Maybe I could read this quote: "It is time for all of us to start to get comfortable with two words: carbon tax. Without it, all these dreams of a green tomorrow are hallucinations."

I don't think now is the time for a carbon tax.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Let me start off where my friend left off, which is, if he actually read the whole report, which I don't think he's probably even seen the cover of, it was a very strong argument that there should be no provincial carbon taxes in Canada, period. It also said that we should not have a taxing system different than the US. Well, what do we have, Mr. Speaker? We have a party that wants to have a different taxing system than the US. It can't even agree with its own national government.

Never in the history of this Legislature has there been a more economically incompetent opposition than that. They should be ashamed, because we just elected a federal government that introduced, in the Mulroney tradition, a change qualitatively in consumption taxes. Knowing we had a higher dollar, that we were hugely dependent on US exports, we took with the federal Conservative Party \$8.5 billion of the cost of doing business in Ontario. We worked with the federal Conservative Party to remove taxes on imported parts. That resulted last year in a 3.8% GDP growth.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The member for Trinity-Spadina, who doesn't seem to understand this—when they were in power, this province lost 1,000 jobs a week; that's 1,000 jobs a week. Now they want to tear up the green FIT program, the feed-in tariff program.

We have in the last four years emerged in Ontario as the third-largest clean tech cluster. That is 90,000 jobs—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Glen, Glen.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I listened to you. You can listen for a second.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't interrupt you, sir.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I do not interrupt you. Ninety thousand jobs—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I only call order three times and then I go to the member for Trinity-Spadina and ask for order. Thank you.



**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Ninety thousand jobs since the recession, a 114% increase, 3.8% GDP growth, our fastest uplift in productivity.

I speak to the senators in Michigan. One of my dearest friends is the deputy leader of the Senate in New York state: a 20% cut in health care and education, because they're trying to do what those folks opposite—the only solution you have is to close our hospitals. In my constituency, when you were in power less than 10 years ago, you closed Wellesley hospital, you closed Central hospital. You took transit money away from low-income kids on ODSP. In Regent Park, dropout rates went from 16% to 68%. That's what you offer: bankrupt economic policies, incoherent fiscal policies, and shoving the burden on the poor and closing hospitals. We've seen it before.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to speak to this resolution, this PC opposition day motion that I put forward and that our leader, Tim Hudak, spoke to earlier in today's session.

We heard a lot of hot air. We might have put a carbon tax on that a few minutes ago and we probably could have looked after some of the deficit and debt that we have in this province. I truly don't know how to remark on what I just witnessed, but that was quite a display.

The reality is, had he been in this chamber from 2003 to 2007, he would have known that his Premier, Dalton McGuinty, signed a pledge that said he would not raise taxes. I quote: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: Not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and will not run deficits. I promise to abide by the Taxpayer...." That didn't happen.

In fact, I was not a member at the time, but my federal colleague John Baird did sit in this chamber as the MPP for Nepean—Carleton at the time, and he was here that day when they put forward that first budget, when that health tax was brought in under the guise of a premium. We later found out that John Baird was right: It is a tax.

Fast-forward to a few years later. I became the MPP in 2006, and at the time Dalton McGuinty had not only raised taxes, he had run up record spending.

He told the *Toronto Star* on September 23, 2007, just before the next election, "We will not have to raise taxes, because we're in charge. We know exactly where we are."

He clearly got lost along the way or didn't have a road map for success, because right after that election we started talking about something called a \$3.5-billion greedy HST tax grab. And that wasn't enough. He increased taxation on a whole host of items in Ontario. We have tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes.

I have to tell you, it's becoming so much more difficult to afford to live in Ontario today. The number

one issue we hear about in our communities is the price of hydro. It is the HST on gasoline and their hydro bill. It is all these hidden fees and taxes that Dalton McGuinty has rung up. During the entire time he has been Premier, he has doubled our debt. He has increased public spending by 70% over that time. We have lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario. Hydro rates are up. Taxes are up. And unfortunately, the folks back home are having a difficult time paying the bills.

It's what we get. If our friends opposite paid attention anymore to the communities that they represent, they would hear from the people who sent them here. They would hear from the seniors who can't afford it any longer because they're on a fixed income. They would hear from the young families on the soccer fields and in the schoolyards who are saying enough is enough is enough. All of this has occurred at the exact same time that this government took Canada's economic engine, the powerhouse of Confederation, from first to worst in economic growth, and has now made us rely on handouts from the federal government. For the first time in our history, under Dalton McGuinty's tax-and-spend government agenda, this province is now a have-not province. They've done it through their massive tax increases. They've done it through their exorbitant spending and wasteful management of our economy. They've driven the jobs not only out of town but out of the province.

Let me say this as somebody who, like many members of this Legislature, was not born in this great province: Many of us came to this province, whether it was from another country or from another province, because it was the strongest place to live and the greatest province of our nation. It was the best place to find a job, to raise a family, to grow old. It was the best place to come because you knew you had strength on your side and a talent pool. You knew opportunity was everywhere. Sadly—this is what frustrates me the most about this government—they took power eight years ago and they squandered that opportunity. They have run this province into the ground. It is time for a change, and on October 6, I can assure you, the Ontario PC caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, will provide that change.

1740

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This simplistic, slogan-laden resolution attempts to suggest that Ontarians are paying more taxes since 2003, but the allegation cannot hold water. In simple terms, it's wrong.

Let's start with what is accurate and what can be verified. Mr. and Mrs. Ontario, your personal taxes are lower now than they were on the last day of the last Conservative government in Ontario. Your personal and income taxes are not merely lower than our neighbouring provinces; they are lower than they are in any of the surrounding Great Lakes states or midwestern states. Your business, corporate and payroll taxes are also lower in Ontario and lowered by a Liberal government, and they're lower than they are in our neighbouring provinces or in the Great Lakes or midwestern states.



What is not said in this resolution is the key to why this Legislature should vote it down. It does not admit that Ontario's Cold War-relic tax system was expensive, obsolete, inefficient, cumbersome, duplicative and, in the 21st century, downright stupid. Who in the world still has any anything like the type of system that we have abandoned, that provincial sales tax? Who in the world has anything except a modern value-added sales tax system? Well, sub-Saharan Africa is one of those places, Burma is one of those places, Greenland is one of those places, and the other one is the United States of America. And the United States of America continues to hemorrhage its national wealth abroad to nations who would act against them.

So where is Ontario? Have we only recovered 20% of our recession jobs the way the United States has, or even 50% as the United Kingdom has? No, we've done better than that. We in Ontario are once again employing Ontarians at the same rate as before the recent recession. We have recovered all of our recession job losses. It's the very first made-in-Ontario economic recovery in our province's history. And why? Because this Ontario government, this Ontario Liberal government, has done something that PC governments from Leslie Frost through Ernie Eves never did: We had the courage, the fortitude, the backbone and, may I say, the common sense to change the way that we levy taxes.

As a result, Ontario seniors, Ontario families, Ontario students and Ontario businesses all know that once you've bought all the things that you normally buy, paid all the bills that you normally pay, filed your taxes and collected your refunds and tax credits, 93% of you have a little more money in your pocket. And that 93% are the low- and middle-income Ontarians, the seniors on fixed incomes, the single moms, the small businesses, the salt of the soil—Mr. and Mrs. Ontario, that's you.

Many of those people are like many of us here: the generation born between 1946 and 1966, the baby boomers. The first of us are now 65 years old, and in the upcoming 15 years, we will collectively consume two thirds of our lifetime health care resources. We're Liberals. We believe in paying as you go. This resolution comes from Conservatives. They don't believe in paying as you go. They borrow, and they don't believe in our generation. They criticize the one measure that helped Ontario renew, build and rebuild 110 hospitals, hire 3,000 new doctors, hire 11,000 nurses and get for Ontarians the shortest wait times in Canada.

They criticize the Ontario health care premium. The PCs opposed it then and would repeal it today. How would they pay for us, the baby boomers, at the moment we need that system as we age? They have no plan. They closed 28 hospitals on their watch. How many would they close or sell to the private insurance companies today, or in the years to come?

A one-point cut in the HST does not come for free. It comes at the cost of any of the following: a 20% cut in hospital funding; the firing of 48,000 nurses; firing 38,000 elementary school teachers; or a structural, permanent deficit of an additional \$3.25 billion per year.

Or is this resolution code language for wholesale private health care, private health care that costs between 10 and 20 times what you pay now in your health care premium? That takes a \$350 health care premium and turns it into a \$7,000 private US-style health tax. Ontario baby boomers will have modern facilities that they need as they age, ready when they need them because their government, their Liberal government, had the courage to make changes, build for the future and pay for it within our means.

As more and more merchants pass through the HST savings, through their "we will pay all your taxes" sales, Ontarians are seeing the price of goods and services decline or remain lower than they are in other parts of Canada. Lower corporate taxes and the ability to pay just one tax under one set of rules to one level of government all mean more profit, more opportunity and more jobs in Ontario. That is our made-in-Ontario economic recovery, and that's why the PC Party has flip-flopped and would not go back to the old provincial sales tax.

Ontarians and their government have an ongoing dialogue over what programs and services constitute good government, and we reached a consensus on how we're going to pay for it. Our party inherited a hidden \$5.5-billion structural deficit and we paid it down ahead of schedule. We balanced the budget, ran a surplus, helped municipalities renew their infrastructure and paid down debt, and we'll do it again in the province's made-in-Ontario recovery.

This resolution would, if enacted, plunge our beautiful province back into a vicious cycle of debt, borrowing, privatization, crisis, cuts, closures and firings. Ontarians said a resounding no to that in 2003 and repeated the same resounding no in 2007. We have the resources we need to move forward in the 21st century, and Ontario will reject this slogan-filled attempt to haul our province backwards to the 19th century.

And in the fall, when we reconvene, Ontarians will continue to be responsibly governed by a fiscally prudent—

**Interjections:** Nine, eight, seven—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** —forward-looking Liberal majority government. Thank you very much.

**Interjections:** Four, three, two, one.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You've proved one thing: You can count, with help.

**Interjections:** Backwards.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Backwards; that's good.

Ms. MacLeod has moved opposition day number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Amott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Clark, Steve  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine

Hardeman, Ernie  
Hudak, Tim  
Jones, Sylvia  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Munro, Julia

O'Toole, John  
Savoline, Joyce  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakabuski, John

Broten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Delaney, Bob  
Duguid, Brad

Leal, Jeff  
Mangat, Amrit  
Marchese, Rosario  
Matthews, Deborah  
McNeely, Phil  
Milloy, John  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.

Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bentley, Christopher  
Bradley, James J.

Duncan, Dwight  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick

Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Phillips, Gerry  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 15; the nays are 42.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until Thursday, May 12, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



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<b>Murdoch, Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
<b>O'Toole, John (PC)</b>	Durham	
<b>Oraziotti, David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	
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<b>Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)</b>	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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<b>Prue, Michael (NDP)</b>	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
<b>Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
<b>Ramal, Khalil (LIB)</b>	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Ramsay, David (LIB)</b>	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
<b>Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)</b>	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)</b>	Davenport	
<b>Sandals, Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	
<b>Savoline, Joyce (PC)</b>	Burlington	
<b>Sergio, Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	
<b>Shurman, Peter (PC)</b>	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Sorbara, Greg (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
<b>Sterling, Norman W. (PC)</b>	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
<b>Tabuns, Peter (NDP)</b>	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
<b>Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)</b>	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)</b>	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Yakubski, John (PC)</b>	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Zimmer, David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	
<b>Vacant</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

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Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day











*Continued from back cover*

### **Long-term care**

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5884
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5885

### **Immigrant services**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5885
Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	5885

### **Highway construction**

Mrs. Julia Munro.....	5885
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5885

### **Water quality**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5886
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5886

### **Environmental protection**

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5886
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5886

## **DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS**

<b>Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa</b>	
Second reading agreed to .....	5887

## **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5887
---------------------------	------

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Paul Marai**

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5887
---------------------------	------

### **Long-term care**

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5887
----------------------	------

### **Plasco Energy Group**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5888
-----------------------	------

### **Christopher Perkins**

Mr. Steve Clark .....	5888
-----------------------	------

### **Catholic education / Éducation catholique**

Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C. ....	5888
--------------------------------	------

### **Public transit**

Mr. Frank Klees .....	5889
-----------------------	------

### **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation training / Formation en réanimation cardiorespiratoire**

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5889
------------------------	------

### **Firefighters**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5889
--------------------------------	------

### **Thunder Bay economy**

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5890
----------------------	------

## **REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

### **Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills**

Mr. Michael Prue .....	5890
Report adopted .....	5890

## **STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

### **Sexual Assault Prevention Month / Mois de la prévention de l'agression sexuelle**

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	5890
----------------------------	------

### **Family service day / Journée des services à la famille**

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5891
-------------------------------	------

### **Sexual Assault Prevention Month**

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5892
-----------------------------	------

### **Family service day**

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5892
-----------------------	------

### **Sexual Assault Prevention Month / Family service day**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5893
-----------------------	------

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Assistance to farmers**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5893
-----------------------	------

### **Multiple sclerosis treatment**

Mr. Kim Craiton .....	5894
-----------------------	------

### **Solar energy projects**

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	5894
---------------------	------

### **Kidney disease**

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5894
--------------------	------

### **Dog ownership**

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5894
------------------------	------

### **Assistance to farmers**

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	5894
-----------------------	------

### **Dog ownership**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5895
-------------------------	------

### **Domestic violence**

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5895
----------------------	------

### **Correctional facility**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5895
------------------------	------

### **Paramedics**

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5895
----------------------	------



<b>Hospital services</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark.....	5895
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5896
<b>Speed limits</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5896
<b>Paramedics</b>	
Mr. Rick Johnson.....	5896
<b>Matthews House Hospice</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	5896

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5897
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5897
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5898
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	5900
Mr. Steve Clark.....	5901
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5902
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	5905
Mrs. Joyce Savoline.....	5906
Mr. Wayne Arthurs.....	5907
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5908
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	5909
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5910
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5910
Motion negatived.....	5912

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 11 May 2011 / Mercredi 11 mai 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing

#### Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011, Bill 186,

#### Ms. Aggelonitis / Loi de 2011 appuyant la stratégie Ontario sans fumée par la réduction du tabac de contrebande, projet de loi 186, Mme Aggelonitis

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5865
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5867
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5868
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5868
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5868
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5869
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5869
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5872
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5872
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5873
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....	5873
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5873
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	5874
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5875

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5875
Mr. Rick Johnson .....	5875
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5875
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	5875
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5875
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5875
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	5875
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5875
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5875
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	5875
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5875
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5876
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5876
Mr. David Caplan .....	5876
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5876
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5876
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5876
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5876
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5876
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5876
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5876

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	5876
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5876
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5876
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5876
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	5876
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5876

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Taxation

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5876
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5877

#### Taxation

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5877
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5878

#### Freedom of information

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5879
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5879

#### Gasoline prices

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5879
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5879

#### Government contracts

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5880
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5880

#### Nurse practitioners

Mme France Gélinas .....	5881
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5881

#### Renewable energy

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5881
Hon. Sandra Pupatello .....	5881

#### Energy policies

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5882
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5882

#### Northern Ontario development

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5882
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5883

#### Family services

Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	5883
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	5883
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	5884

#### Correctional facilities

Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5884
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5884

*Continued on inside back cover*





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de l'Ontario**Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)****Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

Thursday 12 May 2011

Jeudi 12 mai 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve PetersPrésident  
L'honorable Steve PetersClerk  
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Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 May 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Islamic prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA COLLECTION McMICHAEL D'ART CANADIEN

Mr. Chan moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Today I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from York South–Weston. We are proud to speak for second reading of Bill 188, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011.

Our government is committed to advancing Ontario's world-class cultural institutions. They play an invaluable role in our province by preserving, protecting and promoting our cultural and artistic heritage. Through exhibitions, outreach and innovative programming, they help us discover new ideas and inspiration. They help connect us to our past, our present and each other.

Of our great cultural institutions, one of the most well known is the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Since it was founded in 1965, the McMichael has welcomed thousands of visitors from around the world. The generosity provided by Robert and Signe McMichael includes almost 200 works of art, a log-and-fieldstone building and 14 acres of land to the province of Ontario. In 1972, it was officially established as a crown agency through legislation.

Over the past four decades, cultural tourism has become increasingly competitive. The McMichael now faces tough competition from other institutions. But unlike other institutions, the McMichael's ability to renew its collection and its exhibitions is quite limited. The McMichael's current legislation limits its collection to artists that are specifically named in the legislation or others

that are approved by an art advisory committee and limits its exhibits to those that enhance and complement the collection. This is more restrictive than the mandate of other large public galleries. Galleries like the Art Gallery of Ontario or the National Gallery of Canada do not share the same kind of restrictions as those placed on the McMichael in terms of whose work can be collected, how that was determined and what kinds of activities can be undertaken. In order for the McMichael to successfully compete in the cultural tourism market, these must change.

At present, the McMichael requires greater flexibility to enhance its collection and exhibitions, to better reflect Ontario and Canada's diversity, to attract and engage more visitors, and to continue to be sustainable. Our proposed amendments would help support these necessary changes. Our amendments would provide the gallery with the flexibility to develop groundbreaking displays, to attract more visitors and to increase interest in this great institution and collection. These are changes that would help address the needs and the expectations of the McMichael as they exist today.

The proposed changes to the act would allow the McMichael more flexibility in the scope of its exhibitions while still continuing to showcase its permanent collection. It will ensure that the collection continues to have a focus on the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is world-renowned for its focus on Canadian art. We are supporting this focus by making it easier for the gallery to collect works that have made or are making a contribution to the development of Canadian art. These are changes that strike a balance between protecting the McMichael's legacy and providing the gallery with the tools it needs to grow, because in order for the McMichael to attract a broader audience, change is necessary.

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is undoubtedly one of the most significant cultural institutions. It has an outstanding collection, and with its beautifully designed grounds and walking trails it offers local residents and visitors a unique experience of Canadian art, both indoor and outdoor. But since it was founded in 1965, a lot has changed. These amendments would help us get ahead of changing times. They will help us increase cultural tourism and economic activities in the province.

Overall, Ontario's cultural attraction agencies collectively draw more than three million visitors and generate \$4.5 billion annually. They support hundreds of jobs and

improve the quality of life for all Ontarians. They have positive impacts for local shops, for restaurants and, of course, for our economy. The McMichael is no exception. World-renowned for its extraordinary collection, it attracts almost 90,000 visitors a year to the Kleinburg area.

We can and must go further. Our proposed amendments will, if passed, protect the legacy, the memory and the gifts of Robert and Signe McMichael. By helping the gallery continue to grow and be sustainable, these changes will allow the McMichael's legacy to continue to be recognized, protected and enjoyed in the years to come.

We have the support of the McMichael's board for these changes, and that of the surviving McMichael family members too.

I call upon all members of the House to show their support for this invaluable cultural institution by showing support for Bill 188.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is a pleasure to share time today with my colleague the Minister of Tourism and Culture. I am pleased to be able to add my support to this bill today.

As the minister has mentioned, the proposed amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act are important to the future growth and renewal of one of our most treasured cultural institutions. We want to ensure that Robert and Signe McMichael's legacy continues to be protected while giving the gallery greater flexibility to develop its collection and exhibitions. Our proposed amendments would do just that.

The proposed legislation was developed from recommendations submitted by the McMichael board and reviewed by the ministry. Furthermore, we consulted the McMichaels' surviving relatives and their representative to ensure that the spirit of Robert and Signe McMichael's gift was intact. I am proud to report that we have their support and the support of the board for these proposed changes.

0910

Our proposed amendments would remove the list of named artists, make it easier for the gallery to build its collection, provide the gallery with an unrestricted exhibition mandate and update the act by removing sections that are no longer relevant or that are better addressed in the agency's bylaws. Streamlining the act will enable the gallery to attract a broader audience and increase revenue while ensuring that Robert and Signe McMichael's gifts continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

With a clear and unrestricted exhibition mandate, the McMichael would have the flexibility to develop diverse and innovative exhibitions that are more inclusive of a wider variety of artists and works; that provide a broader context for the collection; and that reflect Ontario's diversity and the interest of today's audiences, positioning the McMichael with a greater ability to attract new visitors who would be able to discover and enjoy the McMichael's permanent collections.

We recognize the importance of the McMichael founding collection and world-renowned reputation for

its focus on Canadian art. That is why we are making it easier for the McMichael to continue to build this collection with works that make a contribution to the development of Canadian art, while also ensuring that the collection continues to have a focus on the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Our changes support both of these features. These changes do not impact the McMichaels' gifts. Under the current act, no work of art or land donated by either Robert or Signe McMichael may be disposed of by the gallery. This will not change. In fact, our proposed amendments would help ensure that all of the McMichaels' gifts continue to be recognized, protected and enjoyed in the years to come.

In order to support the McMichaels' legacy, we need to ensure that the gallery continues to remain viable. Our amendments would update and streamline the legislation, making it consistent with practices governing other Canadian and international art institutions. For example, our changes would bring the McMichael in line with many of our other cultural agencies which do not require the minister's approval for the appointment or removal of a director or for approval of their bylaws.

We would also bring further clarity to the legislation. For example, the small cemetery on the gallery's grounds was always intended as a final resting place for the McMichaels as well as for several members of the Group of Seven and their spouses. With the deaths of Robert and Signe in 2003 and 2007 respectively, interments ended. Our proposed amendments would clarify this in the legislation while also ensuring that the cemetery continues to be maintained.

Furthermore, removing the requirement for an art advisory committee will improve the process for the gallery's ability to collect and exhibit artworks. The gallery's board and management will establish policies and processes for acquisitions and exhibitions within the framework of the McMichael's renewed mandate.

Our proposed changes would bring the McMichael in line with current industry standards and practices for other great Canadian museums and galleries. That is why we are proposing amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act now. Our changes would provide the McMichael with the flexibility it needs for future growth and sustainability so it can continue to build on the legacy of the McMichaels to attract more visitors and help them discover the beauty of its grounds and permanent collection.

Our government is proud to help support this important and invaluable cultural institution, and I call on all members here to join us in that support by passing this bill today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Thomson, Jackson, MacDonald, Harris, Lismer, Varley, Carmichael, Casson, Johnston and McMichael: some of the most illustrious names in



the history of Canadian art. On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity today to speak at second reading of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011.

I'm pleased to say that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the member for Durham. The member for Durham makes an effort to speak to every single government bill, and he deserves a lot of credit for this. I know he has got a great deal of interest in this issue, and I look forward to his remarks as well.

First and foremost, we want the McMichael Canadian Art Collection gallery to succeed into the future. We also want to see the memory of Bob and Signe McMichael, as well as their generous philanthropy, suitably honoured in perpetuity, ensuring that the collection will be enjoyed not by a select few but by all Canadians and those around the world.

We also believe that the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and First Nations artists should continue to be the primary focus of the collection, in keeping with the vision of the founders. Any serious effort that would further these worthy goals should, I believe, merit the support of the House. When I spoke about the McMichael gallery in the House on May 3, when this bill was first introduced, I said that our caucus would approach this bill very carefully and with an open mind, as we always do.

Before I speak in greater detail about the substance of the bill and how it would affect the McMichael collection, I want to share a recent experience I had in Wellington-Halton Hills at an event in Elora. Last Saturday, May 7, I attended Artcetera, a three-day fundraising silent and live art auction featuring our local and regional artists. The proceeds from this event benefited one of our province's premier arts organizations, the Elora Centre for the Arts, as well as our local and regional artists.

The Elora Centre for the Arts is a tremendous asset to our community, and this event went a long way to make it even stronger. I want to inform the House of the Elora Centre for the Arts' own account of their role and mission:

"The Elora Centre for the Arts is a vibrant and community-oriented arts organization that inspires and stimulates artistic excellence, aesthetic maturity and critical insight through exhibition, performance and education. It is a national model of a regional centre for artistic endeavour and education.

"It provides opportunities for both artists and the broader community to engage in artistic pursuits of all kinds in a unique historic setting. It offers innovative and creative programs in a broad range of disciplines, including visual arts, spoken word, music, dance and crafts.

"It serves as a home for the local and regional artistic community and provides a venue for people of all ages to experience enriching artistic activities and expression. The centre is a leader in and encourages artistic freedom of expression, innovation and creativity.

"Through its arts education programming, it encourages youth to embrace the arts as integral to life."

To me, Artcetera only confirmed that the Elora Centre for the Arts is indeed fulfilling that important and impressive mission in our community and beyond. For that, I want to thank and congratulate everyone involved, the staff and volunteers, for making Artcetera such a success.

Even though we may not be directly involved in the arts as MPPs, we too in this Legislature and beyond have the opportunity and indeed the responsibility to contribute to the success of the arts in Ontario.

In 1994 and 1995, during my first term as an elected member of this House, I was honoured to serve as the PC critic for culture, just as I do today. At that time, we were the third party in the Legislature. You'll recall those days, Mr. Speaker. Bob McMichael came to visit me at my constituency office in Arthur; at that time, we were located in my home community.

In that meeting, he invited me to come to Kleinburg to tour the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and visit him and Signe at their new, scenic home in Belfountain. When I finally had the chance and the time to visit, I was overwhelmed with the McMichaels' warm hospitality. I spent about an hour with Bob and Signe, and they showed me their still-private collection of Canadian art which adorned their walls in their home. I'll never forget it.

Looking at that Canadian art and listening to Bob and Signe, Ontarians who had done so much for the arts in our province, was very much a privilege. Their passion was palpable; their vision, clear. Even at that time, they were especially concerned about the need to preserve that vision—their vision—for the McMichael Canadian collection. And while it became a public collection because of their very public generosity, it was really their collection, one they had acquired on their own with their own resources before donating it to the province for all to appreciate.

To be sure, I found this special couple to be very inspiring. And so I was pleased when, in the year 2000, our government passed legislation which Bob had sought, ensuring that as long as he and Signe were alive, they would continue to have a very significant role in the acquisition of works of art and temporary exhibitions.

**0920**

When I reassumed my role as critic to the Minister of Culture, I knew that one of the first places I wanted to visit again was the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, as I had done more than once over the years since I first visited during my university days in the 1980s. I visited again in September of 2009. While the gallery is never quite the same as it was on a previous visit, it remains one of my favourite art galleries, as it is for many Ontarians.

The history of this gallery is remarkable. Bob and Signe began their collection in 1955, and just 10 years later it had expanded to over 300 works. In co-operation with the provincial government, the McMichaels donated the collection and their home in Kleinburg to the province of Ontario. The province, in turn, assumed responsibility for the protection and maintenance of the artwork



and the grounds. This took place in 1965, when the gallery was known as the McMichael Conservation Collection of Art.

In 1972, Premier Bill Davis, one of Ontario's greatest Premiers, introduced legislation changing the name to the McMichael Canadian Collection. The legislation also appointed Bob McMichael as director and formed a nine-member board of trustees. In 1981, Bob resigned the directorship and became founder director emeritus. Meanwhile, Michael Bell was appointed director and chief executive officer. In 1982, Ian Thom joined the staff, becoming the curator of collections.

In the years following its inception as a public gallery, the collection broadened to accommodate the McMichaels' vision to include First Nations and Inuit prints, sculptures, paintings and masks. Also added were works by artists such as Clarence Gagnon, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and J.W. Morrice. But the Group of Seven has always been the primary focus of the gallery, along with the works of Tom Thomson. That's a fitting focus, I think, for a gallery set in such a beautiful natural surrounding.

This leads me to quote from the Group of Seven catalogue from 1920, as published by the McMichael Canadian Collection in 1983: "The Group of Seven artists whose pictures are here exhibited have for several years held a like vision concerning art in Canada. We are all imbued with the idea that an art must grow and flower in the land before the country will be a real home for its people."

While I wasn't present in 1920, I was very fortunate to have been present at the 1991 ceremony awarding A.J. Casson the Order of Ontario. I think that the only MPP who is prouder than me to be there, perhaps, was Premier Bob Rae, who seemed to be having the time of his life. But for me, to be in the presence of this iconic figure of Canadian culture was an amazing experience I'll never forget.

As I've said many times, the McMichael showcases the very best in our province and our country. We want the McMichael to succeed; indeed, to continue to show our best to the world.

In a briefing last week, the officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture told us that the number of visitors to the McMichael in recent years has diminished somewhat. Given that this government appears to take Ontario's tourism industry for granted, this fact is perhaps not surprising. I'm told that in 2009-10, there were more than 97,000 visitors, while in 2010-11, that number has slipped to slightly more than 89,000 visitors.

The question, therefore, is: How do we reverse this trend, bringing more visitors, bringing repeat visitors, bringing new visitors to experience the McMichael? This should be part of a concerted strategy to market Ontario as the premier tourist destination that we know it is: the best attractions, the best hospitality, the best festivals and events.

What about the Sorbara report and its many recommendations that seem to be gathering dust? What about

its aim to double tourism receipts by 2020? What about its call to bring our tourism and cultural attractions up to leading global standards? And what about its call to take action, to fundamentally improve tourism in Ontario?

This government's pace in making these changes is frustrating and slow. We're not making the progress we need to make to meet and exceed those global standards. In the McMichael, we have a cultural gem that can be counted as one of the best in the world. But how do we ensure people know that, both at home and abroad? Will Bill 188 contribute to its success? We sincerely hope so.

I was encouraged to read that the chair of the McMichael Canadian Collection, as well as Penny and Jack Fenwick, members of the McMichael family, are supporting this bill. Given their written endorsements and given that we have received no indications of opposition at this time to this legislation from within Ontario's artistic community, the official opposition will not stand in the way of the government's efforts on this issue, and I wish to express support for this bill at second reading.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak about an institution of such importance to the arts in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I believe you indicated you were splitting your time. The honourable member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would first like to thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for giving me the opportunity to also express my admiration and respect for the McMichaels. The comments he made really reflect, I think, a general appreciation and respect for the McMichael as it existed and its work since 1972. At that time Premier Davis, as was said, created this wonderful collection and destination, and we're still talking about it today.

I guess the primary issue that I think is important is, would Robert and Signe McMichael be supportive of the intent of this bill? I also was here in 2000 when this was last debated, trying to move forward, I guess is how you would describe it. In my research, I have come to understand that the sentiment of the board is certainly reflected in this. Also, surviving relatives Penny and Jack Fenwick have given the bill their support, noting that, "The proposed legislation is a reasonable approach to moving forward and would provide a framework to support Robert and Signe McMichael's magnificent vision and their gift of works of art by members of the Group of Seven and other Canadian artists." That's the respect and wishes of the family.

I think if you look at the legislation, it has more specifics in it with respect to the duties that would be required on the passing of this legislation. The bill would do a couple of things that are structural. It empowers the McMichael to broaden its mandate, allowing it to collect and exhibit works not permitted under current legislation. The present legal framework permits the McMichael collection to exhibit only works created by a select group of artists or by artists designated by the advisory committee. The bill will revoke the list of artists, allowing the



gallery to display those works which it deems appropriate. That could be a question, and I know there will be public hearings.

All references to the art advisory committee are revoked. All reference to the special status afforded to Robert and Signe McMichael are revoked, as both have died. The bill provides that the McMichael board of directors must take steps to recognize Robert and Signe's donations to the province. The bill provides for the maintenance of the cemetery to further honour the memories of Robert and Signe McMichael.

The appreciation of those structural issues is important, and I suspect that with the family's support, that's moving forward.

Just a bit of my own contribution and research on this—I should say that I had the opportunity to speak to one of my constituents, Anne Wright, who served on the board for six years—she's just retired, I believe—a wonderful, strong, committed, intelligent woman in my riding who is going on to serve at, I believe, Trent University now. I asked her what her feelings were, and she said that of course it's the wishes of the board to respect what has been respected in the bill, I gather, but also to move forward and to become an enriched destination for the right reasons, to maintain the collection and to make it an exploration for visitors.

She said that her last memory would be the new totem pole in the entranceway, which is a nice bridge between the past and the present. It's a magnificent structure, but when you look at the details of the totem pole—and I did take the chance to see it. I think it must have been maybe two years ago—I could be wrong—when I had visitors from another country here. There's a frog with a laptop and a bear with a cellphone. I think that's the transition really that this bill is moving forward with: respecting the past while having a vision for the future. I'm always moved by that.

Some people ask me regularly—I have a personalized licence plate, and it's "GRP OF7." They always ask me: Do I know them? I have five children, and my wife and I make seven. So we always used to sign our Christmas cards "The Group of Seven." I do know of the Group of Seven and do not have the money to have one. I have a couple of prints—Tom Thomson and a few of them—which are important.

0930

Actually, that brings me to the next point. There's a whole list of those artists that the member from Wellington-Halton Hills—he is very respected in his respect for the work here, and he gave me the privilege to speak. There are a lot of misconceptions. Tom Thomson was not really a member of the Group of Seven. That's a broad misunderstanding, including by myself—I have two Tom Thomson prints, both of the outdoors, one with the canoe and one with, I believe, the pine.

"The life of Tom Thomson was the pure stuff of legends. Most of his later years were lived alone in the forest. His early death, in mysterious circumstances, plus the meteor-like briefness of his dazzling career, combined to turn him into a national icon of art.

"Tom Thomson's art has always had a special meaning for Bob and Signe McMichael, as it has for most Canadians."

There is one example of a well-known, well-respected artist who is not really a member of the Group of Seven.

Another equally famous, I believe, is Emily Carr: "Few artists have wedded nature and the human spirit so passionately as Emily Carr. A headlong, single-minded mingling of art with her love for her native British Columbia produced the finest expressionist painting Canada has known.

"Emily Carr's long career was plagued by difficulties," it goes on to say. There is another very famous icon in the history of Canadian art.

Those were not members of the Group of Seven, but a lot of people think they were.

LeMoine FitzGerald was the only western Canadian painter to become a member of the Group of Seven later: "FitzGerald's membership came at the very end of the group's existence, too late to have any but an honorary significance. He was, in fact, too removed physically, because he was from Winnipeg." I just looked into this.

"Clarence Gagnon was the pictorial bard of rural Quebec. The life and land of the habitant inspired him to some of the most engaging paintings ever made of the Canadian scene."

I guess the point of these Canadian legends, if you will—Gagnon was 1881–1942.

Then there was J.W. Morrice, 1865–1924, "one of the greatest gypsies of Canadian art. Born in Montreal, his wanderlust took him ... to Paris ... Brittany, Spain, North Africa, Tunis, England, Cuba and Trinidad," but he always came back to his original inspiration.

A.J. Casson, mentioned by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills—I also have a Casson print—"left the more elemental and epic landscape of the northland to other members of the Group of Seven. His serene pictorial compositions have emerged mainly from southern and central Ontario settings. Particularly, he has been the pictorial biographer of the small communities of Ontario."

This is kind of the theme: The recording through the eyes and mind of an artist—the way they interpret it—is so important to the whole legacy issue, not to be destroyed but enhanced, if you will, because art, like life, changes, as it should.

David Milne, 1882–1953, "was the quiet man of his generation of Canadian artists. Eloquent in paint, and a descriptive writer in his occasional prose, Milne talked little about his art. Unlike the sociable Group of Seven members, Milne only rarely came into contact with his fellow painters."

They all had a connection and a synergy that was important, and as I say, there's much to be said about all of them. I think the interesting ones I see are Carmichael and, as well, the elusive Frank Johnston, who really only exhibited once with the group and then moved on. He was quite a prolific painter and had his own reviews—a quite large composition of work in the late 1920s. He moved on, I believe, to Winnipeg.



But I liked Lawren Harris. To my thinking, he's quite visionary for his time and quite modern with respect to the traditions of the other painters. He certainly was, I think, quite visionary, and his sort of—I can't even describe it. It's more modern, more geometric; modern as well as a transition between the two members.

I think that what is important also is to thank those members of the McMichael. I had the privilege of meeting the new executive director, Victoria Dickenson, when she was here last week, when the bill was introduced. I thank the board as well as Noreen Taylor and others—I did mention Anne Wright—for the work they do, and all of the trustees, the foundation members and the volunteers who make the McMichael a wonderful destination.

I say that because, on two occasions, I've had visitors from Australia. I have a daughter who lives there, and I have visitors from the Isle of Man. They were here for a very special occasion—a wedding—and we took a special day to go to the McMichael to say, "This is a wonderful side of Canada that's not all a bunch of rough rednecks," as some people from other places might characterize it.

I also think that in my own community, when I was a councillor some years ago—I know of the volunteers in the art and culture world and how important it is to small towns, not just Kleinburg. I referenced it, when it started, as being a small destination, and see what has happened?

I thank the people at the Kent Farndale Gallery in Port Perry. They have displays, and I believe it's an important part, a vital part, of the communities we all live in and represent. The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington is an ongoing place of learning and art. I've worked with one of the small artists; they had an art and politicians display. I only say that because these destinations are important to the tourism of Canada, but more importantly, to understanding the culture of Canada.

I thank the members, as I said before, and those who, in a continuing sense, will move forward. Hopefully, the destination of Kleinburg will be enhanced by this legislation, but the memory will not be lost. With that, I'll concede the time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my honour to stand today and address this bill that's before us.

The McMichael collection, as everyone in Canada knows, is one of the most significant art institutions in this country. It's one that has impressed and awed people who've had the opportunity to go there. There's no doubt that the home of the significant collection of works by the Group of Seven has shown how their vision redefined the way that Canadians and the rest of the world have seen Canada.

This collection, this institution, has been, at times, at the centre of much debate. I don't think there's any question that when you talk about strong people with fundamental visions, thinking about how Canada and Canadian artists should portray themselves to the world, to other

Canadians, we shouldn't be surprised if there has been or can be some difference. But that seems to have been resolved in many ways by this bill. This bill appears to reflect common ground by the major stakeholders involved in this institution.

In my inquiries after the bill was put forward, I had a chance to talk to people in the museum and culture sector, whose response was much quieter than it was a decade ago when this matter was first debated here in this Legislature. My colleague Rosario Marchese was part of that earlier debate. The people I talked to in the arts community said that this is a very precious collection, a very important institution, and that this bill gives the board and the community that is involved with this gallery the ability to hold on to its core and reflect what's critical in our history, but also to expand its offerings to the public so that this gallery, this collection, will not simply be static but, while maintaining the Group of Seven and aboriginal art at its heart, will reflect the ongoing development of Canadian art. That's very important to an institution that is not simply frozen in time, not simply sealed up and seen very occasionally. To have a living, economically viable institution, this collection needs to continually be in a process of self-renewal to be able to offer new works to the public, different works to the public.

**0940**

Let's say you're a visitor to Toronto from anywhere in the world and you go to the AGO. It's very simple: From your downtown hotel, take a cab, take a streetcar or walk. You can go there. This museum, this collection, is outside Toronto.

It's a destination that has to constantly draw people in. Casual drop-ins are not the order of the day. To give it the ability to draw new people, to ensure that its base of support is strong and ongoing, these changes give the board the power to develop and provide programming that will continue to bring in new visitors and continue to expose new generations of Canadians to art that reflects their lives and their realities.

The last debate on this issue, according to my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, was fairly raucous. It was a debate that went right through the arts community. People had very strong opinions. This bill before us appears to many as giving this collection the powers and the options that are consistent with the practice of many other museums and art galleries. I think that the family members, the stakeholders, the board—all of those who worked together to craft this bill—seem to have found that common ground that allows old and very distant disputes now to be gone and gives this gallery a new lease on life.

I'm looking forward to public hearings, in case there are stakeholders we haven't heard from or perspectives that we should take into account. My sense is that probably we're in good shape, but I think it's viable, it's a good idea, to go to those committee hearings and make sure that it's publicly posted. If there are those who have concerns, let them come forward and let us hear them. If



there are changes that are needed, we can discuss that. My suspicion is that we're probably in good shape, but let's just make sure.

In this country, for decades—for centuries—our view of ourselves was dominated by very European sensibilities. I think this collection, this home of very substantial Group of Seven works, is part of Canada's growing up, is part of Canada determining how it will see itself in a very new and very bold way. Many who first see the Group of Seven paintings, not as little prints, as many of us saw in school, but in their full size and their extraordinary glory, never think of our landscape in the same way again—never. So to make sure that this collection, this institution, will be economically viable in the long run, will be a place where tourists, Canadians, residents of the GTA will go, I think is a good step forward.

Speaker, I know that I've been allocated more time, but I'll be quite honest with you: This is a very concise bill which addresses the issues that are before us, there seems to be a general sense of support in this chamber for it to go forward, and there is an honouring of those who have made it possible. I look forward to voting in favour of this on second reading. I look forward to hearing the presentations in public hearings.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Chan has moved second reading of Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Minister Chan.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed? So ordered.

Orders of the day?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** No further business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

*The House recessed from 0945 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today some very special constituents of mine. Stella Samonas has lived in the same house in my riding for 60 years. She is joined by her son Lou, who is here with his three sons, Andrew, David and Marc. Lou and his family are here today to support his wife, Jean, who is here for the International Awareness Day event for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities, being held on the south lawn of Queen's Park today.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm very pleased to introduce a constituent of mine, a very special constituent from

York South-Weston, Carol Sip, who is here to observe question period with us today.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to welcome my constituents Eleanor Johnston and Maureen MacQuarrie, who are here with board member Denise Magi and other representatives from the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario—it's an organization in the riding of Don Valley West—and the Environmental Health Association of Ontario. They're here today for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities. I'd also like to welcome to the chamber Susan Monaco and the Mississauga Fibromyalgia Support Group from the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, as well as representatives from a number of other groups who provide support for those living with these conditions.

Welcome to Queen's Park, and on behalf of them, I'd like to remind honourable members of the reception at noon today in committee rooms 228 and 230.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to recognize a couple of my constituents who are here today supporting the fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities issue. They are Rick and Jackie Forsey, Marg Cartwright, as well as Joanne Shewan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear a ribbon for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities, which is today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Ajax sought the consent of the House to wear the white ribbons. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I welcome to the House today members of the York Region Fibromyalgia-Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Wellness Group: Gisella and Armando Imbrogno, Carolyn Polisuk, Simin Ayati, Irene Turrin, Roland Leandrosz, Cecilia Szalontai, Maria Nakrour and Yvonne Connel.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Cystic fibrosis is the leading genetic cause of death in Canadian children, and today the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is here—I think now for the eighth time—for a reception that will be held in committee room 2. We want to welcome Maureen Adamson, who is the CEO of the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. I invite all members to join me and our other colleagues, Ms. Witmer and Mr. Prue, for that reception.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to introduce a first-year student at Wilfrid Laurier University, a resident of Mississauga South, and my son. Welcome to Queen's Park, Justin Sousa.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'd like to welcome two residents of Nipissing, friends of mine, a prominent businessman from our community, Bruce Knox, and his lovely wife, Marisa Valenti Knox, whom I grew up with. I'm delighted that they're here. They're here in support of the North Bay Food Bank, and we're delighted to have them here today.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm so pleased to welcome today the girls of the girls' government program from St. Nicholas Catholic School and from Edna Staebler. We have Taylor, Jennifer, Kristen, Sabrina, Emily, Abby, and parents Sharon and Wendy, with their teacher Patty Preiss.

Then we have the principal of Edna Staebler, Jeff Parliament, and his students Erin, Megan, Brooklyn, Kaity, Shanza, Missy, and parents Todd and Muhammad. Welcome.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** We're pleased to have one of our pages, Hamza Naim, with us today. I'd like to introduce his mother, Mrs. Sylvia Naim, who is in the west gallery, directly behind me. Please welcome her.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further introductions?

I'd like to welcome today two girls' government groups: from Etobicoke Centre, 13 grade 8 girls from Humber Valley Village Junior Middle School and Dixon Grove Junior Middle School are here today, working with MPP Donna Cansfield to address cyberbullying.

I'd also like to welcome, from Kitchener-Waterloo and member Elizabeth Witmer, 12 grade 8 girls from St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School and Edna Staebler Public school, who are working to address concerns surrounding organ donation. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery, from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, I'd like to welcome Sandi Lopenen and her parents, Don and Mary Burgess. Mary and I go way back, having worked together at Alma College in St. Thomas. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Where's Joe? Will Joe be back before the end of the session?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** My brother Joe will be back, I can assure you.

I wanted to let members know just a couple of items of interest. As many of you know, we've had a resident pair of red-tailed hawks living on the grounds for a number of years now. They're nesting in the white pine outside. George, the CTV cameraman, informs me that there are two baby hawks that are there and have been flapping their wings, so we have proud parents living on the grounds of Queen's Park.

As many of you also know, particularly the urban members, who may not have ever seen a trillium or a white trillium, we did plant, a couple of years ago, white trilliums on the front lawns of Queen's Park. The white trilliums are blooming now: our provincial flower.

It's now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Premier McGuinty says skyrocketing hydro bills

are the price Ontario families have to pay for Samsung jobs. While hydro bills are up—and an Ontario PC government will do something about that, and right away. But let me give an update on those 800 jobs Premier McGuinty said his Samsung deal was creating at the Sarnia solar farm. Today, seven months after the minister rolled in and out of town for a photo op, there are—count them—eight employees; a big difference from 800. One is a security guard and another cuts the grass. I guess you could call that a green job.

Why are you attacking the pocketbooks of Ontario families and defending your secret sweetheart Samsung deal with phony job claims?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I can understand why the member opposite would be very, very uncomfortable supporting his leader's plan to kill thousands—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew and the member from Nepean-Carleton: The Speaker has really nasty allergies and is in a grumpy mood. I would just ask that you be respectful of my sinuses.

Please continue.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I can understand why the member opposite would be very sensitive about this issue because indeed, we're creating thousands of clean energy jobs across this province in ridings like his and ridings like the member for Oxford's, who is sitting just in front of him today.

Yesterday, I brought up an article that was in the Tillsonburg news, where the member from Oxford said this: "The province's deal with Samsung ... could survive under a Tory government." Even their own backbenchers, within hours of making that announcement, are backpedalling on their leader's plan to kill thousands of clean energy jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary? The member for Leeds-Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Back to the Minister of Energy. There are 2 things for certain: An Ontario PC government will give families relief from the price of the sweetheart Samsung deal you're adding to Ontarians' hydro bills and the McGuinty Liberals will throw out phantom job numbers to defend their expensive energy experiments.

Let me update you on the 26 solar installer jobs you promised to create in my riding. Of the 24 people who graduated from that program, only six have jobs—none in my riding. In fact, I don't think the minister can tell me whether they're even working in Ontario.

Why would you think families in Leeds-Grenville will choose phony jobs over real relief a PC government would provide?

1040

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's talk about jobs in communities. Let's talk a little bit about what happened in Tillsonburg this past weekend, because I think the members opposite should pay very close attention to this. The Simcoe Reformer reported that this past week, Siemens



Canada hosted a job fair at the Tillsonburg Community Centre. Some 1,500 job seekers packed the community centre to learn about the opportunities being offered by the Siemens blade plant.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Member from Halton. Member from Thornhill, comments like that are not helpful.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In that community, people showed up as early as 6 a.m. for a 9 a.m. job fair.

I want to ask the members opposite why it is that they want to take hope away from Tillsonburg. Why do you want to take hope away from those workers? Siemens is bringing on a manufacturing plant there that's going to create 900 direct and indirect jobs in that community. Their leader wants to kill those jobs, kill hope for Tillsonburg—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Minister of Energy, Premier McGuinty has admitted that the Samsung deal is a major reason why hydro bills are going up 46%. The Ontario PC leader has laid out a plan to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. My comments on members coming to order apply to both sides of the House. As you know, my motto is "Hear the other side," and I would encourage you to follow the Speaker's lead.

Please continue.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The PC leader has laid out a plan to relieve people of the biggest cost that is driving up hydro bills: your Samsung deal.

Let me update you on the jobs you say Samsung created to make my region a green energy hub: There's no activity and no jobs. Six Nations, a partner in the hub, said they couldn't trust the foreign multinational conglomerate to come through with the jobs, so they walked away.

Minister, if Six Nations can walk away from Samsung without fearing penalty, why can't you?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Our clean energy economy has created 13,000 jobs—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's amazing how quickly I stand and you come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Our clean energy economy has created 13,000 clean energy jobs in the province of Ontario already. We're well on track to creating the 50,000 jobs, and they will be created over the next couple of years.

But I want to talk about the impact that their policy to kill those jobs is going to have on other sectors. Look at our steel industry here in Ontario. Samsung is intending to use 100% Ontario steel to manufacture all of their

wind turbines. That will be 200,000 tonnes of domestic steel with a face value of \$140 million.

Last November, I was in Essex county where 100% Ontario steel towers from Sault Ste. Marie were being constructed. This is what Algoma Steel had to say: that these wind towers are helping them to sustain operating employment levels, which are particularly critical in today's difficult—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the Minister of Energy. Six months ago, the Ontario PC leader and caucus warned you that your Samsung and feed-in-tariff subsidies would kill jobs. It's what the experience has been all over the world when they've tried your expensive energy experiments for themselves.

Spain's Calzada report says that the subsidized power projects ended up losing 2.2 jobs for every so-called renewable energy job. The Bruno Leoni institute found that the price Italy paid for their version of Samsung and FIT subsidies was 4.8 jobs killed in the economy as a whole, and 6.9 jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Why should Ontario families pay 46% more for hydro bills so you can put their jobs and Ontario's economy at risk?

**Hon. Mr. Duguid:** Yesterday, we shared with the mayor of Windsor the Leader of the Opposition's plan to kill over 1,000 jobs in Windsor. Paco Caudet, general manager of Siliken, a solar panel manufacturer that will employ 165 Windsor workers, had this to say about your job-killing plan: "It would be a disaster for Windsor. It would mean, basically, that we would close our factory and leave."

It would be a disaster for Windsor. It would be a disaster for Tillsonburg. It would be a disaster for Guelph. It would be a disaster for Cambridge, Fort Erie, Burlington, Don Mills and communities right across this province. Why do you want to kill jobs throughout the province of Ontario? Why do you want to kill jobs in those communities just when they're turning the corner and recovering from that global recession?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Premier McGuinty used to get that the price of his Samsung deal and FIT subsidies would kill jobs. Back when he was the Liberal energy critic, the Premier said, "There is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment."

He used to get it. But now he listens to his backroom advisers who sold him on the sweetheart deal with Samsung and FIT subsidies. In Denmark, they heavily subsidized their renewable energy sector for 15 years, only to learn that just one in 10 so-called new jobs came to light. Why won't you walk away from this job-killing deal before it's too late?



**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The PC Party's job-killing plan is going to have a devastating effect on our economy and put countless Ontarians out of work. Let's just talk about some of those workers whose jobs you're trying to take away: millwrights, sheet metal workers, electrical engineers, industrial machinery mechanics, welders, machinists, metal fabricators, industrial truck drivers, construction equipment operators, electricians, iron and steelworkers, labourers, and the list goes on.

These are honest, hard-working Ontarians who deserve good-paying, solid jobs. We're providing it for them. You want to take it away. Shame on you for wanting to take away these jobs from Ontario workers after they've worked so hard to turn around our economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Your sweetheart deal with Samsung and expensive FIT subsidies are driving up hydro bills and killing jobs. It was true in Europe, and evidence is piling up here in Ontario. The Sarnia solar farm is the largest solar project in North America and has realized only 1% of the jobs you promised would come. Even your own government backgrounder to the Samsung deal shows that there never were going to be more than 1,440 jobs in renewable energy created.

Denmark, Spain, Italy and Germany all walked away from their expensive energy experiments after it was too late. Why are you so desperate to pin your hopes on a sweetheart deal that will kill Ontario jobs?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The PC Party's announcement this week to kill our clean energy economy is also bad news for Ontario farmers. The same day that they made that announcement, they voted against risk management for Ontario farmers. Our clean energy economy is providing farmers with an opportunity to participate in renewable energy projects. It helps—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe—Grey and the Minister of Agriculture: I'm very pleased to hear you're talking about agriculture, but I would encourage you—the question was about energy. Take the discussion outside, please.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thousands of farmers across this province are participating in our microFIT program, and those guys want to take those opportunities away. Hundreds of farmers are benefiting from our feed-in tariff program, benefiting significantly, and they want to make those farmers take a loss on that as well.

On this side of the House, we're standing up for Ontario farmers. We're going to fight to ensure that they get the benefits of our microFIT program. We're going to fight to ensure that they get the benefits of our feed-in tariff program, and we're going to fight to ensure that risk management becomes the law here in this province. We will stand with Ontario farmers against the PC plan for the next six months and for the next 20 years.

1050

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Premier insisted that the HST wasn't increasing the price of gasoline. Can the Acting Premier explain to drivers how a new 8% tax on gasoline doesn't increase the price at the pump?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Actually, just as we speak, the federal Minister of Industry is holding a press conference to discuss the issue of gas prices. I'm looking forward to hearing what he has to say because gas prices are something that is certainly international in nature, and national. We're a subnational government here in Ontario, and we're subjected to the same international occurrences with regard to gas prices as every other province in this country and every other jurisdiction around the world.

What I will say is this: We welcome the federal government moving forward, if indeed that's what is going to happen today in the announcement by the federal Minister of Energy, to investigate gas pricing across the country. It is a federal responsibility, and certainly I think Ontarians and Canadians would—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Let me get this straight. The Premier says gas companies will just gouge customers if the HST isn't there, but he also says he can't protect drivers from gouging. His solution is to give corporate tax cuts to the same people he says are gouging us. The provincial government has a constitutional responsibility for the pricing of energy. If the McGuinty Liberals can't protect drivers from gas gouging, what exactly are they being paid for?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The NDP act as though somehow they have a monopoly on concern about rising gas prices. Certainly this is something that's disconcerting to us as well. We know it impacts families, and we know, as the Minister of Finance said yesterday, it impacts our economy.

That's why we're encouraged by the fact that there's a press conference happening in Ottawa right as we speak and that the federal Minister of Energy, we expect, is making some form of an announcement. We hope the announcement will involve investigating pricing across the country, because indeed it is a national issue and it's something that the federal government has responsibility for. We would welcome the federal government to conduct such an investigation, and we would hope that such an investigation would lead to some potential solutions on this very, very critical issue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Yesterday, the Premier said that drivers were being gouged. If the government truly, truly believes that, then they have a responsibility to protect families who are already reeling from sky-high costs. What is this government actually prepared to do to con-



front the gas price gouging that the Premier was so concerned about yesterday?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's very important that the member recognize that the federal government is responsible for any combines legislation.

Now, I know that the NDP like to raise these issues. What they don't do, when they raise these issues, is provide any kind of credible, reasonable solution.

We want to encourage the federal government to investigate these matters, investigate how pricing's taking place throughout the country, because this isn't unique to Ontario. In fact, Ontario has seen less of an increase than most other provinces since July in gas prices, but we recognize that's cold comfort to somebody at the pumps today. So we encourage the federal government and the federal Minister of Energy to investigate these matters. We encourage them to come to the bottom of the pricing regime that's happening here in this country, because Ontario and all provinces are subjected to the same system.

### CORONER'S INQUEST

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Attorney General. Sadly, grade 9 student Jordan Wabasse's body was found in the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay Tuesday night. Sadly, Jordan Wabasse is now the seventh First Nations high school student attending high school in Thunder Bay to disappear and die over the last 10 years.

When I asked you about this issue three days ago, you said that "an inquest is under way up north with respect to the deaths." Minister, the inquest you referred to was to get under way in June 2009. It is now almost June 2011. Two years later, young First Nations students are still disappearing and still dying. How do you explain the two years of inactivity on the part of your government?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's a terrible tragedy. All members of this House and all those outside have the greatest sympathy for the families of all of the victims. We all want to know what has happened to the disappeared and why. The police are very concerned, the community is very concerned, and the school, I'm sure, is very concerned.

The Premier actually met directly with the family of Jordan Wabasse several weeks ago. Our government expresses the greatest deal of sympathy, is very concerned, and wants to get answers, just like everybody else.

My friend knows that the inquest began—and I'll defer questions on this to my colleague—several years ago in legal arguments, which have now been resolved—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister also said, "We take any tragedy very seriously, and take the death of young people who travelled to school very seriously. We're working through every ministry and every way to make sure that people are safe."

The inquest was delayed for two years, and during that time, more young high school students from First Nations died.

Can you tell us, when you say that you're doing everything you can, working in every way, what has been done over the last 10 years?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I won't speak about all of the 10 years—and I think the fact that it's 10 years tells us something. It tells us that there are a lot of parties that need to come together.

The inquest, as my friend knows—he doesn't state this in his question, but my friend knows—took time for legal arguments that had to be resolved. I understand that they have been resolved at the Court of Appeal, and that process will carry on.

Every ministry of this government that has touched this issue is deeply concerned with the issue.

The Premier's call yesterday to the Prime Minister to bring all of the parties to the table at a First Ministers' conference recognizes all the different jurisdictions. When you have the federal government responsible for funding First Nations education, a school in Thunder Bay that's run by the First Nation in the province of Ontario, we need everybody at the table to resolve these—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Attorney General refers to legal arguments. What's clear is that what was holding up the inquest was the Attorney General's inability to put together jury rosters that were representative of First Nations. I first asked you about that in 2008; it's now 2011. I want to ask: What were you doing?

As well, the Deputy Grand Chief of NAN says, "While we do not yet know the full details" of the death, "we do know that youth from NAN territory often find themselves without an adequate network of social support in an unfamiliar environment..." That's been going on for 10 years.

I ask again: What have you been doing while these young students have been dying in Thunder Bay?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The question is a critically important one. We've been working very hard through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the other ministries of government, whether they're health or education.

In stating the question, my friend outlines the challenge: Students come from an isolated community, often with no road access except in winter, to a school that's run by the First Nation and that's funded by the federal government, in a place they're not familiar with. There are a lot of different issues there.

We need all of those responsible for the different jurisdictions at the table. The inquest, I know, will provide us with some answers, but there are broader issues as well. The Prime Minister could certainly show some leadership by calling the First Ministers' conference on aboriginal issues and education that he referenced some years ago. We look forward to it.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. A simple question, Minister: How many jobs are there at the \$80-million Windsor Energy Centre?



**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In all of our clean energy economy, as of the end of last year, and the number is growing quickly, we've created 13,000 jobs—many of those jobs, this week, placed at risk by the PC energy policy, which is a job-killing policy.

1100

I've been to Burlington. The party opposite seems to want to deny the existence of these workers. Well, join me in Burlington, where you'll see hundreds of clean energy workers. Join me in Fort Erie, where you'll see hundreds of clean energy workers. Join me in Guelph. Join me in Peterborough. Join me in Scarborough. Right across this province, there are hundreds and thousands of clean energy jobs being created, jobs that you want to kill. You owe those workers the satisfaction of being able to maintain the jobs that they've worked so hard for. We're turning the corner—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm talking about the Windsor Energy Centre—you know, the Dwight elephant, the one attached to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, it's not Dumbo; it's Jumbo in St. Thomas.

I've cautioned the member previously on that comment that he used and would ask that he withdraw it, please.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I withdraw the comment. The Windsor Energy Centre, the one attached to the \$500-million casino that was the Premier's last failed economic development scheme for that area; the Windsor Energy Centre in the finance minister's riding, the one that makes hot air, not power; the same Windsor Energy Centre with all the lawsuits and police investigations: We hear that, despite all the money you've thrown at it, there's only one job to show for it.

Why is every family in Ontario paying for your latest energy experiment with Samsung when your last attempt at using an energy experiment for your seat-loss-prevention program failed so badly?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The opposition will try anything to divert us from the fact that this week they brought out a job-killing energy plan—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Halton. Member from Durham.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Halton again, and Leeds. Halton. Renfrew, we can make it three strikes and you're out.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We're talking about 1,000 clean energy jobs that are being created in the city of Windsor at a time when they need it most.

They want to do everything they can to divert attention from their energy plan that's going will kill jobs in Windsor, Tillsonburg and right across this province. At Siliken, 165 jobs that are being created, you want to kill.

The 700 jobs with CS Wind in the wind energy sector being created in Windsor, you want to kill.

The mayor of Windsor invited your leader out to Windsor to give him a tour to meet those workers. What's your answer? Are you going to go and meet those workers, or are you going to continue to stay here at Queen's Park and hide behind the fact that you want to kill their jobs?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. New question.

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. A report to be released later today shows that one in three low-wage workers in Ontario is a victim of wage theft. The report concludes that, "The legal right to minimum wage, overtime pay and wages is not a reality for people in low-wage and precarious work." That's a very, very sad commentary on the deplorable state of employment standards in this province. My question is a simple one for the Minister of Labour: What is he going to do about it?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you for the question. I would like to, first off, thank the men and women of the Workers' Action Centre who have come forward with the report today. We all appreciate the tremendous advocacy and work they do for those most vulnerable. I'm thinking of the single moms or new Canadians and certainly young workers who start. They deserve to be paid; they've got to pay their bills. We have to do better to continue to support them.

I would also like to recognize, however, some of the significant advancements that have been made, as appreciated by those very same advocates. In terms of prosecution, I just want to cite something: Between 1989 and 2003—that was during the time when both the NDP and the Conservatives were in power—there were 97 prosecutions initiated under the Employment Standards Act, in the entire time. Since then, there have been over 1,800 prosecutions—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The question was about the one third of low-wage workers who have been victims of wage theft and what the minister was going to do about it.

The report actually has some suggestions. It urges Ontario to target industries like cleaning, hospitality, retail and construction, where newcomers to our province have a long, long history of substandard employment practices. We New Democrats have for a long time—for years now—on the order paper urged more and vaster inspections of these very industries.

So I ask again: Is your government going to continue to ignore the plight of Ontario's most vulnerable workers, or will you take the advice this very wise report is giving you and actually act on it?



**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We're doing everything but ignoring those most vulnerable. That is why we now have more than doubled the number of inspectors that are involved. We have now increased the number of inspections to 13,000 since that time.

We care deeply for those new workers. That's why we also offer, in 23 different languages our employment standards. We provide a number of initiatives to support those very same people. And I say this: Any time that anyone feels that they are intimidated or vulnerable, I encourage them to contact us. We have made every effort to try to reach out to those most vulnerable, and we will continue to do so.

## NURSES

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This week is National Nursing Week, to celebrate all the amazing work and accomplishments of nurses across the country. I know that nurses do such remarkable work and I'm proudly part of a government that holds such high value for everything they do. I also know that this government is taking steps to ensure there are more nurses in places where they are needed across Ontario. Will the minister tell the House how the Ontario government is supporting the excellent work of nurses across this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for the question: a passionate advocate for his community and the health care in his community. I want to also take this opportunity to thank all the nurses across this province. Happy Nursing Week. That includes the very hard-working Minister of Community and Social Services, the only nurse in this Legislature, as I understand it.

Ontario's nurses are the backbone of our health care system. They are such a valuable piece of the patient experience. As a government, we understand the value of nurses, and that's why we've created 11,600 more nursing positions in this province since we took office. We have come a long, long way from the days when governments like the government opposite slashed nurses, cut and fired nurses and sent them south of the border. We have made incredible progress—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Minister. Not only does this government have great respect and appreciation for nurses, but we have significantly expanded the workforce to provide more and better care for people across the province. Specifically, this government has taken significant steps in terms of nurse practitioners. These highly skilled people have been given more responsibility under this government and are giving primary care to patients across the province. I would like the minister to tell me about how this government is expanding the scope of nurse practitioners.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm enormously proud of the nurse practitioners across this province and very

happy to report on the progress we have made. When we took office, there were fewer than 600 nurse practitioners; now we've got almost 1,900, so triple the number of nurse practitioners. We've established nurse-practitioner-led clinics across this province: 25 new nurse-practitioner-led clinics. Eight of them are up and running and the patients, I am very proud to report, are ecstatic about the care they are receiving. Once fully operational, 40,000 Ontarians who do not have access to primary care today will have access to the care of nurse practitioners.

1110

We've also expanded the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. We're moving towards giving them the authority to admit and discharge patients from hospitals and giving them open prescribing. We believe—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** To the Acting Premier: What did the Minister of Finance mean yesterday when he was talking about the HST being added to gasoline and said, "It might be that the price would have gone higher had that (HST) not happened"?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the Minister of Energy has spoken eloquently to the issue of gas prices already today.

What we know is that there is a national conversation that has to happen. There's a press conference that has happened today, and we hope that Mr. Clement has made an announcement that will be helpful to people across the country.

This is obviously a volatile and difficult sector. It's something that we all have to be concerned about. But we also need to have the discussion at the level of government where it needs to happen, and that's at the national level.

We look forward to hearing from Mr. Clement and the federal government on what their plan is to work with all of the provinces to address this issue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This McGuinty Liberal government is so desperate and so out of gas that it will say and do anything to get re-elected. In fact, I actually think that they're so out of gas because they can't afford to fill the tank after the HST.

The finance minister says that his idea of relief for families from rising gas prices is by adding 8% more. Seriously, I cannot make that up. It's as absurd as saying that Samsung will only add \$1.60 to hydro bills, or that hydro bills have flatlined, or that smart meter tax machines will actually save you money.

There has to be a reason that this Liberal government is saying that the HST has lowered gas prices. Very simply, Ontario families want to know: Is it because they're getting us ready for a 1% or 2% hike of the HST?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand the political motivation behind the member opposite's comments. I understand that. What I don't understand is—



*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members from Halton, Oxford and Renfrew, your seatmate would like to hear the response.

Please continue.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I don't understand is what the position of that party is on this issue. Let me quote from the MPP for Simcoe. He says that "regulating gas prices hasn't worked and that oil companies have taken advantage in the past when governments have tried to alter the tax structure on gas to save consumers money."

So I say to the party opposite: They have among them members who understand that this is a complex issue. They have among them members who understand that this is something that has to be dealt with at the national level and that all provinces are struggling with this. To play politics with it does not help the substance of the issue.

We look forward to the federal government's pronouncements today on how they might take this issue forward.

#### PATIENT SAFETY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, the province's medical regulatory college announced that there would be no discipline for the Windsor doctor who performed two unnecessary mastectomies on two women. Janice Laporte, whose breast was removed by Dr. Heartwell, was told a week after her surgery that she didn't have cancer at all. Laurie Johnston had a mastectomy performed by Dr. Heartwell and learned later that the results were misread.

Ms. Laporte said to a news outlet, "Laurie and I are victims, we will always be victims, and God only knows who else this is going to happen to ... I just think people have to make sure you look out for yourself because our government's not going to look after us obviously," Laporte said in tears."

What does the minister have to say to these women who feel so abandoned and betrayed by their own government?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me begin by saying that my heart goes out to Laurie Johnston and to Janice Laporte and their families. This obviously is a tragedy, and we are determined to improve the quality of care in our health care sector. In many ways, the improvements in quality have been inspired by the experiences of people who have not received high-quality care.

I cannot comment on the specifics of this case, and the CPSO, I'm sure, would be prepared to talk about it, but I can speak to the actions of this government since we became aware of the issues in Windsor.

When I became aware, I appointed an investigation team to go into the Windsor-area hospitals and look at this issue and what was going on. They have reported back to the ministry. We're implementing their recommendations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Patients in Ontario must have trust in their health care system, and right now, that trust has been betrayed. The Ministry of Health's own investigation pointed to systemic problems in our province's pathology system, but today Ontarians have no assurance that these problems have been fixed.

Ontarians need to know that what happened to women like Laurie Johnston and Janice Laporte will not happen again. When will this government be able to show Ontarians a clear plan—not a promise; a clear plan—for making sure that this is the case so that other women do not have to experience what these two women went through?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can absolutely assure the member opposite that we are moving on every one of the recommendations by the investigators that were sent in to look at this exact problem. For the member opposite to suggest that we are not moving forward to improve quality in our hospitals is disingenuous at best.

What I can tell you is that we have appointed a supervisor at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital. Ken Deane is on the job making the changes that were recommended.

More broadly across the sector, the Excellent Care for All Act that was passed unanimously by this Legislature has been hailed as perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation since the introduction of universal health care. Hospitals are now publicly reporting on quality indicators and developing annual quality improvement plans, and the quality of health care in this province is getting better. We have more work to do, and this party is committed to continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I'd like to ask you a question about bullying that occurs both internationally and nationally—cyberbullying. It's a very significant problem in all communities, and in particular in communities such as mine, where there is such access to computers. I want to know and understand what Ontario schools are doing to make the schools safe places for our students.

As you heard, today at Queen's Park the girls' government groups are here, and they're raising this issue of cyberbullying because the students are exposed to it in an increasing number of ways.

Minister, please share with us what we are doing to help these students and their parents.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm very happy to receive the question. I'm very happy to have the opportunity to respond when the girls' government are here to hear it as well, because I think it is important you are aware that bullying awareness is an important issue for our government.

One of the first things we did was to introduce legislation, the Safe Schools Act. In that act, we have made bullying an offence for which students can be suspended.



We've made it very clear that not just the parents of the students who might be suspended but also the parents of the students who would have been bullied must be notified. We've also provided resources, money, to school boards to train staff around the issues of bullying and how those issues should be dealt with in our schools. So I say to everyone in this assembly, particularly to our visitors today: It is an important issue we have been working on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** As we often say in this Legislature, Ontario youth are our future, and we do have a responsibility to ensure their safety.

Never more than today has the Internet played such a significant role. Not only can they access different forums from around the world, but it impacts the lives of our students as well. It has the ability to enrich lives, but it also has the ability to be a potential threat. It's often used to target youth and can result in our youth being victims of cyberbullying or, in worse cases, of sexual predators.

Minister, can you please tell me what the McGuinty government is doing to ensure the safety of our students when they use the Internet?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm going to ask this to be referred to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Our government has invested more than \$3 million to date in the safer and vital communities grant program. This program focuses on the prevention of crimes against children, women and seniors, as well as hateful and racist crimes.

1120

An example would be in Renfrew: North Renfrew Family Services received a grant for a program on cyberspace safety. Among other things, this program educated parents about Internet luring, cyberbullying and how to protect their children.

Also, the OPP's Internet exploitation and threats training: OPP officers are educated in cyberbullying, specific investigative techniques and directions on how to deal with cyberbullying cases. Officers are also provided with resources such as presentations for youths, educators and parents.

## ORGAN DONATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased today to be joined by the 12 grade 8 girls from Edna Staebler and St. Nicholas schools in Waterloo. They're here, as you've said, as part of the girls' government program.

These girls have identified organ donation as a priority that needs to be addressed. After reading—this is to the Minister of Education—about an organ recipient, they were quite shocked, after doing some surveys, about how little was known about organ donation. They feel it's critically important to raise the awareness.

What they are suggesting, I say to the Minister of Education, is that you would consider making revisions to the

curriculum that would include educating students, beginning in grades 6, 7 and 8. On behalf of them, I would pose that question to you.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, I'm delighted that yet another question that is important for everyone in the assembly—but I'm particularly happy that the girls in government group are here to hear the response that I have.

In the province of Ontario, the honourable member would know that we do have a process in place around revising curriculum on a regular basis. This particular issue would probably, I would expect, fall in the health and physical education curriculum. I think that this is an important issue and something that most definitely would be, could be and should be considered as the review process unfolds next time, or even perhaps before. It is something that I can definitely bring to the attention of the folks in the ministry and bring to their attention that it would be part of the next review cycle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again, to the Minister of Education: I do appreciate the response.

As the girls took a look at the issue, they realized that it really was important that the younger generation become better informed about organ donation. They were quite shocked to learn, for example, that there were 1,500 people waiting on the list last year and that there are people dying every few days because there are so few organ donations made.

They also recommended that we need to take a look at exposing younger people to organ donation; making people feel comfortable. They're suggesting that, perhaps through the Trillium Gift of Life Network, they should somehow be expanding the publicity that would appeal to the younger generation and using advertising that would appeal to them. Would you support their recommendation?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, a wonderful recommendation. What I can say to the honourable member is, I have listened very carefully to the question that was posed in the assembly today. The honourable member would be aware as well that we have a curriculum council. My intention would be to take the information that you have presented here today and present it to the curriculum council. I would ask them to take that into consideration as they deliberate important curriculum matters going forward.

I do thank you for the question, and I thank the young people who have come here today for the good work that they have done to bring an important issue to our attention.

## SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Education as well.

Christina Buczek of Toronto is here in the gallery. She's here because her 14-year-old daughter Emily, who is autistic and functionally non-verbal, recently received a refusal-to-admit notice from her Toronto board of



education, which was unable to accommodate her attendance at a Toronto high school. Emily has been sitting at home, denied her basic right to an education, since April 7.

Will the minister take action to ensure that Emily and all mute or verbally limited children get the supports they need to participate fully in Ontario schools?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** This is a very important issue, certainly, for the family and for the student involved. These are matters, my experience has been, that are best handled and dealt with, first of all, at the school level, and failing that, I think it would be important for the parent to be in touch with people at the school board office. If there's still not satisfaction, then it would be important for the parent to have a conversation with the locally elected trustee.

There's no question that, in this province, our government has increased support to school boards to support students who have particular needs. So we know that the resources are there within schools.

Again, I would say to the honourable member, it would be very important for the parent to have those conversations with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I would just remind the minister that this mother has been in touch with the world for years. Christina has had a lifelong struggle trying to get her daughter the support she needs. Everyone knew since last May that she needed a trained assistant and money that should be coming from the special incidence portion.

First, Emily was discharged from an intensive behavioural intervention program, despite the fact that she was making progress. Now she has been sent home from her high school. Neither the Ministry of Children and Youth Services nor the Ministry of Education seem to be able to provide Emily with the curriculum and communication supports she needs.

What will the minister do to ensure that children and youth like Emily do not fall through the cracks and receive the supports they need to fully participate in Ontario schools?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** You've identified the mother as being here today, so I want the mother to know that our government takes very seriously the responsibility we have to provide boards with the support they need to support all children in our schools. I can tell you that we have increased funding—and I don't expect that the mother has come here to hear me say that today.

It would sound, from the question, like the honourable member has maybe even more detail that would be helpful to me. Perhaps after this session, I could meet outside with the honourable member and get the full picture of the situation, and I will do my very best to provide the direction that might be helpful.

## MULTICULTURALISM

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, multicultural-

ism is a pillar of our society. Since Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy, multiculturalism has shaped our society. It made us stronger.

Around the world, many countries would like to replicate our success in building a strong multicultural society. Many nations have looked to Canada and Ontario as an example of how to create an open, inclusive society, a society where our diversity is our strength and widely celebrated.

Minister, what has our government done to support multiculturalism in Ontario and make it the success it is?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** One of Ontario's greatest strengths is its diversity. We know from our province's history that our past and future success is dependent on our ability to bring people together, to celebrate each other's cultures, our traditions, our skills and our contributions. In this way, Ontario is unique. People from 200 countries around the world call our province home.

Rather than seeing multiculturalism as a challenge, the McGuinty government welcomes and celebrates diversity as an opportunity. We do so not only because it's the right thing to do, but because these new communities enrich our culture and make us more competitive in the global economy.

I've seen first-hand the horrors of conflict which arise when communities and governments discriminate against difference. That's why I'm proud to be part of the McGuinty government, a government that knows that diversity makes Ontario stronger, more vibrant and more prosperous.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** This week, controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders spoke to audiences in Ontario. While in Ontario, he criticized multiculturalism as a "disaster" and called for an end to Muslims immigrating to Canada. Mr. Wilders has even compared Islam to communism and fascism.

1130

When I hear these hateful rants, I am extremely offended. Constituents in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River are offended. Muslims across Ontario, and especially those in my riding, are disgusted with this individual's deplorable views.

Many distinguished Ontarians have spoken out against Mr. Wilders. The CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Bernie Farber, recently said that Mr. Wilders knows how to offend in the grossest possible way.

Minister, will you speak out against—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Let me be clear. Mr. Wilders's comments are not only disturbing but extremely offensive to Muslims and indeed to all Ontarians and to our core values of diversity, tolerance and inclusion. The McGuinty government absolutely opposes the politics of division and discrimination. Side by side with all Ontarians, we denounce all forms of discrimination, and we stand with all our communities against it. When it comes



to protecting our human rights together, our resolve will never waver.

The most effective way to fight hate and Mr. Wilders's divisive and disgusting statements is to renew our commitment to embracing, honouring and celebrating our diversity and our human rights, not only in words but in actions, and I'm confident that Ontario will continue to be a shining example of these cherished values.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, in June 2005, the terms of reference for the environmental assessment of the Highway 427 extension were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment. Later that same year, public consultation began for the proposed 6.6-kilometre extension. A full six years later, the Ministry of the Environment approved the EA for the extension of the 427 to Major Mackenzie Drive. Minister, can you tell me why, after six years, your government has now said that the 427 extension is not a priority?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the member opposite knows, the EA on the 427 was completed this past November. I think that demonstrates that we understand the importance of this corridor. We are currently working on preliminary design and planning.

The reality is that there are hundreds of projects around the province that need the attention of the ministry, and we are working on those. They're in various stages of completion. What we also need is the funding to make sure that those projects go forward.

As I've said in this House before, we put \$2.8 billion into new roads and new bridges and repairing and expanding the highway network in this province. That is a substantial investment, far beyond what the party opposite did when they were in government. We will continue to make those investments, but the reality is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, I was disappointed to read in the local paper that you said that the 427 extension is not a priority for your government. Commuters in my riding have been waiting since 2005 for Highway 427 to reach the southern end of Caledon. Businesses in my riding have been waiting six years to have an improved transportation corridor for the movement of their goods. The region of Peel's Goods Movement Task Force reported in 2010 that highway congestion in the GTA cost \$2.7 billion in lost opportunities for economic expansion.

Minister, can you please explain why a project that was started by your ministry in 2005 is no longer a priority?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Here is what is a priority for our government: A priority for our government is to make sure that we make the ongoing investments in infrastructure, including transportation in this province, so that we can repair and expand the highway network, the transit network, that's needed for the people in this province. Integrated transportation is a huge priority for us.

What's interesting is that this is a question from a party that has said that all tax cuts are on the table. When they go into their convention, presumably they're going to bring out some kind of plan. Everything is on the table in terms of what they might cut, and yet they have members standing up asking us, who have invested \$2.8 billion in highway infrastructure this year, why we aren't moving faster, why we aren't doing everything that they want, when they are on the brink of bringing out a plan that will cut infrastructure funding in this province.

### ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**M. Michael Prue:** Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation. Le 20 avril dernier, j'ai demandé au premier ministre qu'est-ce que son gouvernement fera pour améliorer le manque de places dans les écoles publiques francophones à Toronto. His response was a string of polite words about great teachers and high-scoring EQAO test results.

Thousands of parents and children who have the constitutional right to French-language education have waited for seven long years for answers. Will the government make good on its commitment to assist the Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest in obtaining surplus schools in the city of Toronto so that its students will have schools to attend this September?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity in this House to say to all of the members that our government has provided extraordinary resources for French-language boards across the province, particularly with respect to the public French-language board in the city of Toronto.

My office is very aware of the pressures they have around accommodation. We have been working with all French-language boards in the greater Toronto area to appreciate where there are surpluses and where there are needs and bring the parties together so that the appropriate accommodation can be provided for all students in the French-language system.

I also want to say that my colleague the minister responsible for francophone affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, has been really outstanding in advocating, pressing for and actually making sure that we get together and we understand the complexities of the issues in French-language—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** We understand that school boards are supposed to co-operate, but we also know that when the co-operation has not been there, this minister and this ministry have a responsibility to step in to ensure French-language services.

The Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs is also concerned that the rights of French-language students in Toronto are at risk. In fact, after I spoke to the Premier, she commended me for raising this important issue in the Legislature. She knows that the commitments

were made; she knows that the conseil scolaire has been patient, but that the situation is now abysmal.

My question: When will the government stop stalling and commit to provide the school buildings which are badly needed by French-language students here in Toronto?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** First of all, I want to say that our government respects the locally elected school boards. We work with them to do everything we can to ensure that students have the appropriate accommodation. That is why—because we are absolutely committed to a quality French-language program in Ontario—our government has constructed 80 new schools for French-language students in the province of Ontario as well. I would say that that has been an unprecedented investment: 80 new schools, or upgrades to French-language schools.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I know there's disbelief on the other side because they ignored them, but this government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. There seems to be a lot of misinformation around the HST and how it applies to families who want to buy a new home. Many people in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock are unclear about how the HST affects the purchase of a home in Ontario. Of course buyers are confused about the application of the HST on homes; the parties opposite have been out there confusing the people of our province and stating things that are simply untrue.

Buying a new home is one of the most important investments a person will make in their lifetime. It's crucial that Ontario families know the facts when it comes to how the HST affects their real estate purchases. Can the minister set the record straight for the people of Ontario and for the parties opposite, who are clearly confused, and tell them how the HST applies to real estate in the province?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for the outstanding work that he's been doing to get the message out about the HST, making sure that his constituents know the facts.

To the member and to the House: It is really important to get on the record that when it comes to buying a new home, it's very important to note that there is no HST on the resale of homes and there is no HST on any new home up to \$400,000.

#### VISITORS

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I just want to take an opportunity to acknowledge two important individuals from the

area of Mississauga South who weren't acknowledged today: Howard Klein and Jeff McPhee, who are active volunteers, members of the Port Credit village community. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** I also want to acknowledge two individuals, Nirmal Gill and Gurinder Gill. They are visiting us from London, England. Mr. Nirmal Gill is the mayor of Barking in London, England.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome to Queen's Park, Your Worship.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean-Carleton has given notice of the dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Acting Premier concerning the HST. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's a pleasure to introduce Mr. Jasjit Samud Rai, who's visiting us from India. He's with the Indian forestry service. With him are members of my constituency Mr. Kuldip Singh, Darvara Singh, Harbajan Singh, Gagandeep Singh, Avtar Singh, Parminder Grewal and Jasbir Pabla.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I would like to introduce Ms. Irene Turrin, who is here with the fibromyalgia awareness group today. We want to welcome her along with many others who have come to Queen's Park today to advocate for the government to be aware of the importance of this disease.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### FIBROMYALGIA, CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME AND MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AWARENESS DAY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** May 12 is the national awareness day for fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and multiple chemical sensitivities. These illnesses are characterized by severe cognitive problems, non-restorative sleep, chronic, often disabling muscle pain, depression, poor stamina, and many other symptoms. Some 440,000 Ontarians alone have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

The women and men who come from all ages and backgrounds are left in a very weakened physical and emotional condition. It often gets to the point where they cannot even feed themselves. Many of their jobs are lost,



their family is distanced, and friends who cannot understand often simply walk away.

The government must work in tandem with the medical establishment to adequately research the causes and treatment of these conditions. There's still much to be done to change public awareness and dispel the invisible myths surrounding these illnesses. Those who suffer from fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and multiple chemical sensitivities are real people with real illnesses who need real solutions.

Today, a number of people afflicted with the conditions of fibromyalgia join us in this chamber to send a clear public message that the time to move forward to fund proper research and develop workable solutions for our citizens has come and is, in fact, long overdue.

#### FIBROMYALGIA, CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME AND MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AWARENESS DAY

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** This may be in part a duplication, but I had a young lady in my office this morning representing the same organization.

Today, May 12, is international awareness day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities. These illnesses have many overlapping symptoms, including neurological and cognitive problems, muscle and joint pain, and overwhelming fatigue. These illnesses are all debilitating, multi-system physical illnesses that affect individuals of all ages, children included. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, over a million Canadians have been diagnosed with one or more of these conditions, and 440,000 of these people live in Ontario.

There is much need for more research into the causes and treatment. No treatment research centres yet exist in Ontario.

Awareness events like the one held today on the front lawn at Queen's Park put a real face on these people who live with these life-changing illnesses. It takes courage every day to live knowing there is no cure, no ongoing funding for treatment and no research or education for our health care practitioners.

Please join me in applauding the efforts of the many dedicated volunteers from 30 grassroots support groups, provincial associations and organizations who all do their best to provide education, information and support, including the ME/FM national network, which will be hosting an international research conference in Ottawa this September.

#### CYSTIC FIBROSIS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** May is Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month. Cystic fibrosis is the most common fatal genetic disease that affects Canadian children and young adults.

The effects of cystic fibrosis are most devastating in the lungs, and most CF deaths are due to lung disease.

Despite progress, there is still no cure, and each week in Canada, two children are diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and one person dies from this horrible disease. Only half of all Canadians with cystic fibrosis are expected to live into their 40s and beyond.

Cystic Fibrosis Canada is a national health charity with over 50 volunteer chapters. The organization has set its sights on finding a cure and helping people and families affected by cystic fibrosis cope with their daily fight.

I'm pleased today to welcome here representatives from Cystic Fibrosis Canada: Maureen Adamson, chief executive officer; I'm told Paul Arsenault, past president, and Miles Nagamatsu, the treasurer, are here as well; Kerri Dawson and her son Louis Eberschlag, who is almost one year old and has CF; Trevor Roberts; Kelly Gorman; Aida Fernandes; and Dave Ronson, president-elect of Kin Canada.

Cystic Fibrosis Canada is a global leader in CF research. This research has far-reaching benefits to other diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and HIV/AIDS. The research and clinical care advances funded by Cystic Fibrosis Canada help to improve care and quality of life for people with CF. They also present new opportunities for chronic disease management and system cost containment.

During the month of May, CF Canada is organizing many events to raise awareness and funds to support vital CF research and care. To learn more about cystic fibrosis, visit [drowningontheinside.ca](http://drowningontheinside.ca).

#### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to talk about my Bill 114, which was debated in this House on October 28 last year. The bill, in a nutshell, would make it illegal for an employer to take a portion or all of an employee's tips as a condition of their keeping employment. We have debated this, and I have asked questions of the minister on many occasions since then. I do know that letters and correspondence keep coming in to my office, and I'm sure that if I'm getting them, so is the minister and so are other members of this Legislature.

Quite recently—within the last few weeks—I got three letters. I'd better put my glasses on to read them. I'd like to read into the record what servers are saying.

One says, "I'm a bartender at a downtown restaurant/club and my employer deducts 2% of whatever I sell, which ranges my payout from anywhere between \$40 to \$200 a night to cover what I've been told is their debit/credit fees, two nights of night cleaning and glassware.... I'm tired of having my employer's operating expenses externalized on my tips, which account for over 60% of my income."

Another one I got: "Just recently heard that a bill was trying to be passed and just wondering if this is something to look forward to in the near future." This is a woman who loses \$150 to \$200 a week.

A third one writes, "This is extremely unfair and should not be allowed to continue. Why should a server, who gets \$2 below the minimum wage, be allowed to share their hard-earned tips?"

We're asking that when this is negotiated, please consider putting this forward. The servers of Ontario are looking for government help.

#### SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRE OF SCARBOROUGH

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** This past weekend, I attended the inauguration ceremony of the new centre of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba community of Scarborough, in my riding. For 25 years, the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Scarborough organization has engaged thousands of people from different religions, nationalities, races and economic status in the spiritual advancement of humanity through the principle and practice of selfless love and service to the community. They strive to spread the human values of truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence to the community.

I commend the leaders of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Scarborough for their vision and persistence, and congratulate the community, who worked extremely hard to help raise the funds required to build this landmark building, one of the largest outside of India.

1310

I'm proud to be affiliated with this organization, previously as a city councillor in their rezoning application and now as their MPP for the grand opening. I wish them continued success in their new home.

#### SLEDGE HOCKEY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** A few weeks ago, my hometown of London hosted the World Sledge Hockey Challenge. The championship was played at the Western Fair Sports Centre from April 19 to 23 and attracted fans and future players to the city of London.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all the people involved in the organization of this event, including Todd Sergeant, who chaired the organizing committee. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate team Canada, which included quite a few outstanding players from throughout Ontario, for winning gold in this tournament.

Sledge hockey is a fast-paced, aggressive sport that was invented in 1960. Designed to allow people with physical disabilities to play hockey, it's now one of the most popular sports at the Paralympic Games.

Hosting the World Sledge Hockey Challenge not only raised the profile of the city of London, but also shows how much London cares about the sport and how much it cares about people with physical disabilities. It also helped the city of London to make most of their facilities, especially the Western Fair Sports Centre, accessible to all the people who are in wheelchairs and to make it accessible for all people to play sledge hockey in the city of London.

Again, I want to congratulate the city of London and also the organization for the great event in London.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I rise in the House today to support Clarington Wind Concerns. This group has taken a stand against this government's policy of imposing industrial wind development in Clarington and, indeed, across Ontario.

I'd like to congratulate the leadership of my community and my citizens, led very competently by Heather Rutherford, for her advocacy and their advocacy.

Citizens are asking for very simple things: safe setbacks to protect our environment and safeguards for human health. They want further research into potential health risks. No doubt these are among the issues covered in the Wind Concerns Ontario spring tour to connect with local citizens and to raise awareness.

Mr. Speaker, you would know that wind turbines are just another example of this government's failed energy experiment and lack of respect for elected local governments. The McGuinty government's expensive and unsustainable energy program and its sweetheart deal with Samsung are among the reasons why Ontario families are fed up and they can't afford to even turn on the lights in Ontario. Ontario's bills are forecast to rise by \$732 a year. It's simply unsustainable.

Renewable energy must be integrated into Ontario's energy supply mix in a reasonable way that makes sense, but the process must be competitive and transparent. I urge this House to respect Ontario citizens and to pull the plug on McGuinty's expensive energy experiments once and for all. You'll get your chance on October 6.

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It is about time for the federal government to transform the employment insurance system and end discrimination against Ontario workers.

In April 2009, this House unanimously passed my resolution, which put the federal government on notice that unemployed Ontarians deserve the same benefits they would get if they lived elsewhere in Canada. The current formula doesn't address the needs of Ontario's labour force. If Ontario workers received what is given to workers in other provinces, they would receive an extra \$4,000 per year. This support would help parents who have lost their jobs pay the mortgage, buy groceries, buy gas and get the training they need to get back into the workforce.

I call on the newly elected federal government to end this inequality against Ontario workers and the labour force of Mississauga-Brampton South and to do what is right and fair.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** We all know the key to a strong economy is good jobs and a healthy population.



That's why we've made really vital investments to build a stronger and a cleaner economy. These investments are bringing our energy systems into the 21st century. They create tens of thousands of jobs and they're making the air cleaner and easier to breathe.

I think we're all dismayed to hear the Leader of the Opposition vow to eliminate these jobs and stop Samsung from investing \$7 billion in our province. He said he'll cancel the contract that has already created 1,800 jobs. He's going to scare away future investment, and he's threatening to board up manufacturing plants right across this province. On top of that, he wants to return to dirty coal.

I'm particularly concerned locally about Satcon Power Systems. They recently expanded their workforce to 158 people, creating 40 new jobs for Burlington families. These jobs could disappear, along with the jobs created by more than 30 other companies that have announced plans to participate in Ontario's clean economy, all thanks to the Leader of the Opposition's reckless plan that could kill an entire industry.

In contrast, under our government, Ontario is moving forward. We're creating tens of thousands of jobs and we're emerging as a world leader in a fast-growing new industry.

#### VISITORS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Before we proceed, I ask the indulgence of the House, and I ask order too.

I want to welcome, on a personal note, the folks from Cystic Fibrosis, and particularly the president-elect of Kinsmen. Being a life member of Kinsmen, I was the governor of District 1 of Kinsmen back in the early 1970s. It was the first time that we raised over \$100,000 in one year for cystic fibrosis, and I understand it has just gone up and up since then. Good for the association and good for Kinsmen.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT ACT (ANIMAL PROTECTION COMPLAINTS COMMISSIONER), 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX DE L'ONTARIO (COMMISSAIRE AUX PLAINTES RELATIVES À LA PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX)

Mr. Berardinetti moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 194, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to establish and provide for the office of the Animal Protection

Complaints Commissioner / Projet de loi 194, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario en vue de créer la charge de commissaire aux plaintes relatives à la protection des animaux.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Does the member wish to make a short statement?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Just a very short statement.

This bill amends the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to establish the position of the Animal Protection Complaints Commissioner.

The commissioner is an officer of the Legislative Assembly. The commissioner's functions are to investigate any decisions made by, or any act or omission of, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as well as to educate the public about the obligations and prohibitions under the act regarding the care of and harm to animals. The commissioner is required to report annually on the affairs of the office to the Speaker of the assembly.

#### PETITIONS

##### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's always nice to be first once in a while. However, I have a number of petitions from my riding of Durham which are very important, and I'm going to read one of them now.

1320

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I'm pleased to sign it and support it and present it to Hamza, one of the new pages.

##### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition.

### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** This is a petition calling on the Ministry of Transportation to install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road in Orillia.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road in Orillia is a main traffic link for Notre Dame Catholic School, for the Odas Park fairgrounds and a number of local businesses; and

"Whereas we are concerned about the increased congestion and safety of the travelling public and the transportation of children to Notre Dame Catholic School;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to have the Ministry of Transportation install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road, Orillia."

I'm happy to support this and will pass it to Erica to give to the table.

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to present another group of petitions from my riding of Durham.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care;"—personal care—"legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual"—per year, for life. "And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to one of the pages, Hamza.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I see that it's been signed by residents of Guelph, Wellington county and of Waterloo region. The petition reads:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

"Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply-managed commodities; and

"Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We applaud the Ontario government's support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector."

I totally agree with this and I will add my signature as soon as I find my pen.

### SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** A solar farm petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build solar-powered generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

"Whereas Tim Hudak, Garfield Dunlop and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcome, wanted and at prices Ontarians can afford;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new solar developments on



municipalities that have not approved and whose citizens do not want them in their community.”

I'm pleased to sign that and give it to Kyla to present to the table.

**ONTARIO SOCIETY  
FOR THE PREVENTION  
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I must be a popular person; they're sending all these petitions to me. This is a group here that I've received from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification”—this is a bit dated;

“Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

“Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA” at that time;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees”—who is here today—“on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

““That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make” all “necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services.””

I'm pleased to sign it and present it to the page here at Queen's Park.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION  
DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU**

Mr. Dickson moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation

firearms / Projet de loi 189, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I rise in the House today to address a growing problem—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Joe, you need another book.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm trying to hide, honourable member Yakabuski, behind here.

I rise in the House today to address a growing problem facing our communities, public school students, their parents and families, and our law enforcement officers in Ontario. There are a growing number of converted starter pistols and replica firearms making their way into neighbourhoods and on streets across the province of Ontario. Recent media coverage of robberies and assaults involving imitation firearms has elevated the concerns in my riding of Ajax–Pickering. I'm here to address those concerns with my private member's bill, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000.

Let me first share a news story with the Legislature, which took place in my riding. In October of last year, Durham police were called to Notre Dame, which, when you combine with the public board's J. Clarke Richardson, is one large secondary school with an enrolment of almost 4,000 students—a mistake that happened with the previous government.

**1330**

We had an incident following reports that a 15-year-old student was seen with a handgun concealed in his waistband. He was in class at the time, and the portable was surrounded. Other portables in the vicinity were evacuated, and the school was placed in lockdown. Tactical officers called the boy out of the portable where a class was in session, and he was arrested. A search revealed a loaded Glock-style pellet gun inside the student's gym bag.

This student was arrested without incident or injury, according to the police and the media. However, as you can imagine, the situation could have been tragically different had the young man brandished the gun in front of the responding officers. Whether a gun is real or fake, a police officer only has a split second to react when a gun is pointed at them. I never want to lose a child or a police officer.

Fast forward to the present. In March 2011, Durham Regional Police Service announced that they had seized four starter pistols that were reportedly used in the commission of a crime, or at least possessed for that purpose. All four looked like real handguns, and one of the pistols had been modified in order to fire real bullets.

That last piece of information is the most concerning. These starter pistols, which you can purchase at a number of shops in and around the GTA with little more than one piece of government identification, can potentially be converted into genuine ammunition-discharging firearms, and they are already on our streets.



The Durham police media advisory hit the local Metroland Media paper, and that's when I contacted Durham police chief Mike Ewles, who's very aggressive in the community. We discussed how we could work together to tighten the laws and regulation on replica handguns and starter pistols in the province of Ontario. In his media release, the chief emphasized it by saying, "It's becoming very clear...that criminals have turned to these devices to threaten and intimidate victims and, in some cases, may have successfully adapted them to become real guns."

I agree with Chief Mike Ewles. This needs to be addressed and is a very real concern, and the problem reaches far past Ajax-Pickering and Durham region. A recent CTV news report quoted an RCMP firearms expert as saying that the conversion of starter pistols is so easy that even a layman can do it. The same news report talked about an incident out west in Vancouver, where three converted firearms were seized over the past few months.

Here's an especially daunting quote from that article: "In New Westminster, BC, the combined forces unit raided a military surplus store and seized 1,000 rounds of ammunition and 100 guns.

"Police allege that the owner sold three starter guns to undercover police officers and then told them how to convert the guns. Officers say the owner didn't ask for a firearms license" at the time of purchase.

You may be wondering: Are starter pistols and replica handguns federally regulated? The answer is no. Do starter pistols and replica handguns have serial numbers like real guns do? The answer is no. Definitely no. I can tell you, it's a real concern.

We have current Ontario legislation passed by the previous government, which attempted to address the problem in the year 2000. This legislation, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, defines the terms "replica" and "firearm" and "starter pistol," and imposes moderate fines for those who sell a replica or starter pistol. Still, all you need to purchase one of these potentially-convertible firearms is a driver's licence. They are sold at some sporting goods stores, hunting shops, army surplus stores and virtually anywhere in Ontario.

Currently, a retailer can get a fine of \$15,000 under the legislation if they sell an imitation firearm without the purchaser's proof of legal age, which is 18. That is essentially all that the legislation does to make sure starter pistols and replicas don't end up in the wrong hands.

I'm proposing two additional requirements upon purchase. The first additional requirement proposes that the individual, the purchaser of the starter pistol or replica, will be required to provide a written statement that describes what his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearms are. It also includes a declaration that he or she will not use the imitation firearms for unlawful purposes. This is not simply stating, "I promise to behave." Rather, it is a way to track the purchase of an imitation firearm and holds an individual responsible and accountable for it. This means that the gun simply can't

disappear into the wilderness once it has left the store. The store owner is required to keep a record of these statements.

Number two: The second additional requirement proposes that the purchaser must have obtained a criminal background check which reveals a clean record. This one is logical. It should have been in the original legislation, and I'm surprised that it is not.

A few months before the previous government passed this legislation in 2000, our former member and past Attorney General Michael Bryant came forward with a private member's bill with the same goal: to regulate the sale of imitation firearms in the province of Ontario. I thank him for his assistance in this process that I've gone through. It was called the Replica Firearms Regulation and Protection Act, 2000. I believe that Bryant's bill actually had more teeth than the bill that was passed by the previous government of the day, so I've taken the important parts of the bill and I'm proposing to fit them into the existing legislation. The requirement of these two additional pieces of information at the time of purchase will help track purchases and ensure that convicted criminals can't buy an imitation firearm to use as they please or see fit.

Imitation firearms still pose a risk even if they are not converted into a real gun. They are used to intimidate and rob victims, and as I have covered already, they are much easier to obtain than real handguns. Imitation firearms appeal to criminals and young offenders because of their propensity to intimidate the victims. A study from the federal Department of Justice acknowledges that sometimes firearms that are used to intimidate a victim may not be real firearms. The same report also referenced a 1994 study that found that, in the few cases of armed robbery where they were able to obtain information on the type of firearm, 43% involved handguns, and 36% involved imitation firearms or air guns. Imitation firearms are highly prevalent in recorded cases of armed robbery, and our law enforcement agencies are reporting more and more cases.

Our current provincial government continues to help reduce crime in Ontario. I should note that overall in Ontario, this has fallen 17% since our government took office in 2003, and we've seen an 11% reduction in violent crimes as reported by the office of the Attorney General. Our current Attorney General, the Honourable Chris Bentley, and our government have been proactive in battling guns and gangs with the provincial anti-violence intervention strategy, or PAVIS. Since 2007, these initiatives have led to more than 1,100 arrests, 2,000 criminal charges and the removal of 200 illegal firearms off our streets. Our Durham Regional Police Service is one of 17 services that receive this funding. This past January, our government announced an additional commitment of \$15 million towards the PAVIS program over the next two years. That is a 41% increase above the original \$16 million provided through this program since 2007. The program has seen positive results and continues to see results.



My proposed amendments, if passed, would help prevent some of the starter pistols and replicas from reaching the street level. The proposed amendment is to increase the fines for sellers contravening this act: \$25,000 for a first offence and \$50,000 for a second offence, rather than the current \$15,000 fine. Most retailers will comply with the law.

The incident in my riding of Ajax-Pickering in October was followed by more recent reports from other areas of the province such as St. Catharines, York region, Sudbury and Barrie. I know some of our members in the House may wish to speak to that today in their particular area, in their ridings.

In conclusion, I am proposing stronger regulation of imitation firearms, replica firearms and starter pistols in the province of Ontario. I'm proposing amendments that increase accountability for purchasers of imitation firearms and ensure that convicted criminals cannot purchase them. I'm proposing increased fines for sellers who do not co-operate with the legislation.

I look forward to continuing to work with all members of Durham police services; their police chief, Mike Ewles; and other community leaders throughout our Ontario government as we tackle the problem of replica and converted starter pistols.

1340

I ask for your support, ladies and gentlemen. We've seen photographs in the newspaper. I'm just deathly concerned that we could lose a child or lose a police officer when something dramatic happens in a split second. I hope this new legislation goes a long way to covering that off, and I thank you for your time here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to private member's Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms. In the explanatory note, "The bill amends the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

"Currently, the act prohibits the sale of an imitation firearm unless the purchaser is at least 18 years old and presents specified identification. The amendments impose additional conditions on the sale of an imitation firearm. These conditions include that the purchaser must provide a description of his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearm and that the purchaser must not have been convicted of a criminal offence.

"The amendments impose a requirement on a person who sells an imitation firearm to keep a record of the sale for five years.

"The amendments increase the maximum fine to which a person who contravenes the prohibition regarding the sale of imitation firearms may be liable."

We've got some concerns with this bill. As the member mentioned, it was our party, the former government, that passed the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000. He mentioned that the former Attorney General, when he was a member of the opposition, had a private member's

bill himself back before they became the government. I'm curious as to why, if the former Attorney General was so supportive of regulatory changes and amendments to the bill, he didn't do it himself? He's been out of the House now for, I guess, the last three years, but he had five years here, a lot of those as Attorney General and justice critic. He brought in pit bull legislation etc., but why would they not have made an amendment if it was so important to the Attorney General when he was in opposition? That's something I'd like to understand.

We've got, what, two or three weeks left here? We're at the end of the session and we're bringing in a bill, and I'm not sure if we've got the support of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We tried to contact their office, and we didn't get a response. As a result of that, we haven't seen any reason for the ministry to actually support these amendments.

I did contact—I've introduced a number of private member's bills, and any time I deal with anything with community safety, I always try to deal with the stakeholders. In this case, when Bill 189 came up, we immediately contacted the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police to see if they had a briefing paper on it, because normally a member would contact the policing stakeholders to find out if that had actually occurred. In this case, it's our understanding that probably the Durham police chief was contacted, but other than that, none of the other policing stakeholders.

What I want to do today is just read into the record the position paper on replica firearms prepared by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police youth committee. It's not very long—it's a couple of pages—and I'm sure I've got enough time to do it.

The overview: "The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's (OACP) youth committee was asked by the association's board of directors to examine the significant threat to community safety posed by replica firearms. Our examination of the issue has led us to conclude that replica firearms contribute to the fear of crime and gun violence in our communities, are often used to commit other violent acts, increase the anxiety level of our front-line officers, and contribute to the glamorized Hollywood image of gang culture.

"In many communities around the province, there is a rise in imitation firearms offences which exceeds offences involving real firearms. Replica firearms can be used with a high degree of confidence in the commission of other offences because of the high quality of production. In today's world of consumerism, more and more people feel that they must have the latest and greatest devices available. That consumer culture is not lost on replica firearms. Many of our young people feel that they cannot be seen as being weak to others for fear of being exploited. A replica firearm can offer the illusion of power associated with possession of a real firearm. Ontario's communities are asking for greater control over this emerging trend.

"Legislative considerations: The issue being considered in this paper is the applicability of current legis-



lation on this topic and the suitability of local bylaws to address the concerns.

"Currently in Ontario, there are three layers of legislation addressing replica and imitation firearms. At the federal level, the Criminal Code of Canada outlines laws and related offences for violations of the laws. Provincially, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act addresses the topic and some local municipalities have enacted bylaws for replica and imitation firearms.

"The Criminal Code sets out separate and distinct definitions for replica and imitation firearms. A replica firearm is defined as, 'any device that is designed or intended to exactly resemble, or to resemble with near precision, a firearm ... ' An imitation firearm 'means anything that imitates a firearm, and includes a replica firearm.' Replica firearms are prohibited devices and as such possession of these devices constitutes a criminal offence. Imitation firearms, on the other hand, must be used in connection with another criminal offence before criminal prosecution is made possible. In addition, the Criminal Code sets out offences relating to firearms, including air pistols, and has regulations speaking to each.

"At the enforcement level, the criminal possession of a replica firearm, a prohibited weapon, is challenged by the restrictive definition contained in the Criminal Code. To exactly resemble or to resemble with near precision is a very fine line and it is left to the judicial system to determine on a case-by-case basis whether the specific device exactly resembles a firearm. It is often very difficult to discern the difference between a real firearm and a replica firearm for officers proficient in firearms. It is even more difficult for officers who are not firearms experts and to members of the general public. Once the weapon is in the possession of a police officer the officer must then make a determination regarding the extent to which it exactly resembles a real firearm before deciding to prosecute. This is an extremely difficult decision. The judiciary relies on case law, legal arguments, and legal opinion to make those decisions.

"Moreover, when officers are faced with one of these weapons [they] must make a split-second decision on what type of weapon is confronting them and react accordingly. When an imitation firearm is pointed at any person it must be treated as real. Officers receive training on the use-of-force options available when presented with potentially lethal force. In addition to communication, lethal force is an option available to police officers based on a number of impact factors. The implications of this decision have significant and long-lasting effects.

"Calls for less restrictive definitions prohibiting the possession of imitation firearms have been heard through our communities. When imitation firearms or replica firearms are used in conjunction with other offences, such as robbery, the enforcement options are less convoluted. Unless the device falls within the restrictive definition of a replica firearm, possession of the device does not constitute an offence. Potentially, a person could openly carry an imitation firearm, one that while looking similar to an actual firearm does not exactly resemble a real

firearm, and walk through the streets of our communities without committing an offence.

"The Imitation Firearms Regulation Act of Ontario defines an imitation firearm as 'any object ... [that] could reasonably be mistaken for a firearm but is not a firearm or a replica firearm as defined in section 84 of the Criminal Code (Canada)....' The legislation creates an offence to sell or transfer an imitation firearm in the course of business to a person under 18 years of age. It does little to address the concerns associated with the possession of these weapons. While restricting the sale of imitations to persons over 18 years of age it still provides a method for these devices to be legally sold in the province. Not all imitation firearm misuse is contained within the youth population.

"Perhaps the more relevant question to answer is, 'What is the legitimate use of imitation firearms in our communities?' For many in our communities, the answer is that these devices have no legitimate purpose in public places and, as such, bylaws have been enacted to restrict sales and possession of replica and imitation firearms for persons under the age of 18 years of age.

"The creation of a lower form of regulation governing the peaceful possession of replica and imitation firearms does, while well intentioned, present another series of enforcement challenges. These devices present a very serious decision-making challenge for police officers, even those with expertise in firearms. These types of incidents call on the full range of use-of-force training options available to our police officers. Presumably, a bylaw could be enforced by local bylaw officers who have not been privy to the same range of training as a police officer.

"Our police officers" often "report having difficulty in distinguishing the imitations from the real firearms and the bylaw officers would have the same difficulty. The difference is that if the device turns out to be a real firearm, the police officer is trained and equipped to respond appropriately. A bylaw officer should not be placed in the position of making those life-or-death decisions or be placed in a position where they may be confronted with a real firearm. Other challenges are posed in relation to the limitations at the lower level to arrest, detain and search individuals and individuals in vehicles or residences who may be in violation of the law.

In conclusion: "The heart of the issue being addressed in this paper is the applicability of current legislation regarding imitation and replica firearms. The OACP acknowledges that these devices present a very real threat to the safety and the perception of safety of our community members and police officers. They, in part, contribute to some of the anti-social behaviour displayed by some of our young people when trying to emulate and participate in gang culture. These devices are often used in the commission of very serious criminal offences that have significant negative impacts on our victims of crime. At the same time, these devices and devices such as pellet guns and air pistols have been in our society for many years, and when used responsibly have not created



the level of fear currently being experienced. It is the improper use of these devices and the restrictive enforcement options available that has fuelled the drive for local legislation to fill the gaps.

1350

"The OACP believes that it is inappropriate for these types of serious incidents to be addressed through lower level forms of legislation.

"The OACP believes that the improper use of imitation firearms in connection with other criminal offences is currently addressed within the Criminal Code.

"The OACP believes that there is room to reform the restrictive definition of replica firearms contained within the code to allow for reasonable enforcement options for front-line officers when dealing with the possession of these devices in our communities.

"The OACP believes that gun culture is a complex problem and there is no simple solution. Education, awareness and prevention campaigns addressing the mindset behind the desire to possess real-looking imitation firearms must be addressed by all of our community partners. The committee also recognizes that our municipal partners have attempted to answer the desires of their communities by creating legislation to help turn the tide of this growing trend.

"It is the position of the OACP that this issue is serious and complex and is best addressed through legislative reform in our criminal justice system."

In summary, I just want to say that it would have been nice if the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police could have been notified of this bill. I think there are some opportunities for improvements to it. I think that all of our policing stakeholders should be of the understanding.

I am disappointed with something like this that the former Attorney General said was a good bill as a private member's bill when he was a backbencher, but when he got into government it takes eight years and nothing has happened, and here we have a private member's bill basically at the end of the session.

I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to other comments on the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I've listened intently to the debate, and I must admit some level of confusion when I read the bill because, although it is very laudable what the member is attempting to do—it's very laudable to give the police extra tools, and it's very laudable to try to cut down on crime or people using imitation firearms in the commission or possible commission of a crime—we wonder how effective this bill is going to be.

I need to preface my remarks by the fact that I'm more than happy and willing to allow the bill to go to second reading, if in fact that's where the Legislature decides to send it, but we have some very major questions on the effectiveness of what is being proposed.

If I could go through some of that, the first is that the bill requires a written statement that outlines what the purchaser intends to use the imitation firearm for and

attests that it will not be used for illegal purposes. I'm sure everybody's going to sign such a form. I'm absolutely positive that everyone is going to say it's not going to be for illegal purposes; in fact, it probably won't be for that at all. The majority of them are more than likely going to be used for what they were intended for, as starters' pistols for races, regattas and the like, so that people will know when they can start the race. In any event, people are going to have to file that written statement.

The second thing is, it will require the purchaser to pass a criminal background check. Again I'm wondering, if a person is going to use the starter's pistol for a legitimate purpose and perhaps has a criminal record, does that preclude them from being a coach or a person who is at the line at the start of a race or some regatta in which a loud noise needs to be made? Are those people therefore prohibited from participating in sporting and other like activities in the province of Ontario?

You have a third one, that sellers are required to keep records of the sale for five years. I really don't have much of a problem with that.

The fourth one is that it increases the maximum fines from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for the first offence and \$50,000 for subsequent fines.

Perhaps in the time remaining to him, which is, I know, a minimum of two minutes, but it could be longer if some of his colleagues decide to give up some of their time for speaking on this, he could answer some of our questions to assuage some of the concerns we have in advance.

Although I have indicated we are likely to vote for the bill in any event, we need to know a couple of things. There are published studies that show that crimes involving imitation firearms have significantly increased in a number of jurisdictions. We are unaware whether those jurisdictions include Ontario. Perhaps the mover can tell us whether there is any kind of statistical information that indicates that this is, in fact, an occurrence that is happening in the province of Ontario.

We want to know as well what percentage of crimes involve legally purchased imitation firearms. As we know, the United States, that great country to the south of us, is a sieve for many types of firearms, legal and illegal, crossing over it. Imitation firearms of all types, I'm sure, probably do not originate in this country or in this province; the majority would come from there. Therefore, we need to know, if these are to be registered, how they are registered and the keeping of records; how many are actually legal starter's pistols being used in the commission of a crime that have been purchased for a purpose which is legitimate and lawful and known to the public; how many of them are being smuggled across the border; and what, if any, effect would this bill and its provisions have in stopping that trade and stopping that use?

The third question we have: Are there figures to distinguish crimes carried out with legally obtained replicas versus crimes that involve imitation guns that have been



stolen or obtained by other illegal means? We need to know and the Legislature needs to know—perhaps the police can give this information to us—the ratio of legally obtained replicas being used in the commission of a crime and those that have been stolen or obtained by other illegal means.

We also have some questions about what purpose the declaration declares. In our view, when a person goes in and buys a starter's pistol, they're going to state that it is being bought as a starter's pistol. Nobody who intends to use it for a crime is going to say they are going to use it for the commission of a crime. We already know that. We need to know the purpose of the statement, other than, I guess, that it could be used in a court of law to say that you lied when you bought this starter's or replica pistol, because you said you were going to use it to start a race and in fact you were going to use it to hold up a bank. Other than that, I don't think anyone who has an ulterior motive is going to go in to buy a replica pistol and say they're going to use it in the commission of a crime. If anybody thinks that is going to happen, please indicate that during your speech, because we want to hear that this is somehow going to happen. We wonder what possible purpose the signing and keeping of these declarations is going to serve.

We also think that the declaration may possibly help to increase the punishment for violators but have little weight as a preventive tool. As I said, I can see that the judge, leaning heavily over the bench, will look at a perpetrator and say, "You lied at the time you bought this. You said you were going to start a race, and in fact you were going to rob a bank. Therefore, I'm going to give you a higher fine." But I think the fine would be serious in and of itself, no matter how it was obtained. Perhaps the member, or someone else who is speaking to this, can tell us what this declaration is going to do.

We also have the whole issue of increased fines. We need to know, in terms of this bill, how many times fines have been levied under the current act, because this is simply increasing those fines. I don't know; I'm singularly not aware of any. There could be some fines that have been levied against people using imitation firearms for purposes other than starting a race, but we don't know how many times this has been levied under the current act. Has the highest possible fine, which is \$10,000 at the current time, ever itself been levied? Therefore, to what purpose is the increase in fines? I think that's a legitimate question that has to be asked. Has there been a willingness to use the measures on behalf of the judiciary if anybody has in fact been found guilty in Ontario of the extant law? We have all of these questions.

1400

We're all in favour, and we are totally in favour, of any measure that will assist the police in maintaining law and order in Ontario. We fully understand that there are people in this province who are bound and determined to break the laws, and if one of the ways of breaking the laws is to walk around with a starter pistol, if one of the ways is to walk around with an imitation firearm, if one

of the ways is to intimidate, saying that they have a weapon when in fact they don't, we need to stamp that out.

The question comes down to, in wanting to give these additional powers to the police, the judiciary and everyone else, what is the purpose of the law? How is the law going to act? Why are declarations necessary at the time of purchase? How many imitation guns are being used illegally in the province of Ontario at this time? What is the success rate of police apprehending those that have been obtained illegally versus those that were obtained legally and are now being used for ulterior purposes? And a whole bunch of other questions.

I welcome the member's contribution. I welcome that if this passes, it will go to second reading, but I will tell you that it will be difficult to answer the questions that I have asked, never mind the perhaps hundreds of others that will be asked at the time that this is debated. I ask the member to think honestly and clearly and quickly in terms of how these are going to be answered, because the public has a right to know why the bill is being proposed and what is going to happen to it.

Again, I thank the member for his contribution to the debate. We will support it at second reading, but there are so many questions at this point that we need answers to. We hope that they are forthcoming.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I'm delighted to stand in support of this bill. As a former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I can bring some light to the discussion. You should know that particularly in 2005, which in Toronto was dubbed the summer of the gun, there was a spike in the number of gun-related homicides, notwithstanding that on a comparative basis across the country and across North America, it was still very, very low. But for Toronto in particular, it was higher than in the past.

Now, that resulted in some very tragic situations. An organization called UMOVE, United Mothers Opposing Violence Everywhere, headed up by Audette Shephard, came to see me with other members of this group, and they all had pictures of their young sons who had been shot and killed in gun-related gunfights. Unfortunately, a lot of that was as a result of a gang culture where having a gun gives you stature. It doesn't really make any difference whether it's a replica which is almost an exact copy of a real gun or an imitation gun or a starter gun, the mere fact that they are carrying a gun allows for someone else to retaliate with a real gun, and then it's a problem. I support anything that will make it more difficult and at least try to act as a deterrent.

I'm sure some of you may know, but you might not know, that we had a situation in Toronto where a mother was making her 13-year-old son's bed and found a real—not a replica—AK-47 in his bed, and he's 13 years of age.

I've gone into schools, depending on where they are, and when I talked to students in my role as Minister of



Community Safety, I'd go into some schools in very affluent neighbourhoods, and they had a whole line of questions that their teachers had prepared for them, talking about things that had nothing to do with guns. And then I'd go into another area that had a particularly high crime rate and a particularly high gun-related crime rate, and all the kids wanted to talk about was guns and tell me the stories about how they hear guns being fired, and it's just a matter of course in that particular neighbourhood.

I think it's critical that we take a look, and we're asking what the police say about the number of guns. I can tell you that at the present time, the number of illegal guns that they have identified is about 75% that have been imported from the United States, and 25% of the guns come from thefts from gun collectors. I don't have the exact figures, but I would assume that the proportion would be very much the same with replica guns, which, as I say, are virtual, direct copies of a real gun. Even the police have difficulty in ascertaining whether they are real guns or replicas. The imitation guns and the starter guns are a different breed, and they are handled differently by the police.

I think anything we can do to get the people who are selling these guns legally—to make sure that they are more attentive to who is buying them and that there is some attempt to keep a record of these particular guns. What people don't know is that when you bring an illegal gun into the country, there is an ability to trace where it was first sold, regardless of where it was sold. Even though they have attempts to file off the serial numbers, there are serial numbers in there that they can't reach. The police have the ability to do that. They can say, "This gun started out in Los Angeles." How it got to Toronto they don't know, but they know where it started from, and at least that gives them a starting point from which to determine how this gun got here.

You can go to flea markets in the States where you can buy attack weapons, mortars, all of these things. All you have to do is show your driver's licence, and you can walk away with those firearms. It's a serious problem, but the good news is that it's not as great as in some jurisdictions.

I commend the member for bringing this forward, and I hope that we'll all support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm very happy to rise in support of Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, the existing legislation, which was created in the year 2000.

Certainly, the existing legislation is what I would describe as toothless—simply the requirement to provide photo ID for the purchase of an imitation firearm or a starter pistol. So the provision in the bill that we see before us today requiring a criminal reference check, I think, is a very good step forward. Increased fines are important, as well.

This is an area of some concern in my riding and in York region as a whole. After a recent incident where a

Vaughan man was charged with possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose after police were called to Richmond Hill, Sergeant Gary Phillips of the York Regional Police told the York Region Media Group that the York Regional Police deputy chief suggests starter pistols and other replica handguns aren't needed at all. His comments followed several incidents involving starter pistols in York and Durham in the last several months.

So it is an issue of concern in my riding, to the extent that in 2006 the town of Aurora tried to bring forward a bylaw. They made some recommendations to the region of York and circulated them to all of the other eight area municipalities—along the line of the member for Simcoe North. He suggested that perhaps bylaws could be used. The difficulty there is that you're going to get a patchwork of bylaws across the province. I think consistency is always something that is to be applauded. At the end of the day, when it came to smoking bylaws, I know that it was more effective to have provincial legislation.

I applaud the member for bringing this forward. I think there certainly needs to be considerable discussion at committee as to what an amended bill might look like, but I think this is a very good step forward.

I know there are so many members of our caucus wishing to speak to this. I will confine my remarks to those.

1410

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I just have a couple of minutes. I did want to relay a tale from a friend who had twin boys and like all parents—of our generation of parents, anyway—tried to keep firearms of any sort, even imitation, away from their children. These two boys, never having had a gun or being allowed to have a gun of any sort, actually chewed their toast in the morning into the shape of a firearm and used it to go bang, bang at each other. I'm not saying there's anything inherently violent in the male psyche. Actually, some of my best friends are men, including my husband. But it strikes me.

When I look at this bill, it is well-intentioned. There's no question: We all want the same thing here, and we want what the member who proposed the bill wants. The question is, is it the most efficient and effective way of going about it? It seems a little bit—and a researcher said this, so hats off to researchers, by the way, before the end of the session; we never acknowledge our researchers. They said this is deterrence by red tape. I tend to agree with that assessment.

I think if you look at an example of a jurisdiction that's done it rather well, it's the UK, where they simply banned outright the sale or importation of realistic firearm imitations. That makes sense to me. Like, just get on with it. Just do it once and get it over with. I can't imagine any rational reason for production of something that looks exactly like the real thing other than to commit a crime with. A starter pistol, yes, there's a role for that, of course. There's even a role for toys, but you could make them significantly different and that could be part of—and is part of what the UK did.



Yes, it's a well-intentioned bill. Yes, it should go to second reading. No, I don't think it quite accomplishes what the member would intend. As a private member's bill, we would want to hear, of course, from those in the field, from police and others who have a stake in this, but more to the point, I think, to look at the outright ban of anything that could be used to commit a crime like this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Let me lend a few words of support on this Bill 189 to my good friend from Ajax—Pickering.

Let me say from the outset that I'm not a fan of any gun. We never had one in our home. Thank God, I guess, none of my kids had any interest. I say that because then you are less tempted to maybe use it for whatever reason. I guess this is from my view, maybe because of my mentality or where I am on this: Anything that we can do to restrict the use of or any attempt to use replica firearms falls into the same category.

As I heard some of the other members in this Legislature during this private members' time, there are challenges to refine this if we're going to put it to use. Of course there are. It is complicated.

Yes, when I first looked at this, frankly, I said, "We're trying to kill a little fly with a great big sledgehammer. Is this the right way to do it?" So I do have some of those questions, but the fact of the matter is that we are debating it here today. Our final goal, if it will get to committee sometime—and if doesn't, then hopefully somebody will bring it back up—is to at least put those feelers out there to see that we need to deal with this issue.

I'm going to support this, to try to get it advanced as much as we can. I look forward to the vote in a little while.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** When the member from Parkdale—High Park was speaking, I was just wondering: In this day and age, why do we need these starter pistols? You'd think we can develop a way of starting a—I guess it's a track and field event. Why do we need a starter pistol? I don't know why we need to even manufacture these things.

Anyways, the member from Ajax—Pickering—obviously, this has been raised locally in Ajax, and the thing that he pointed out is, it's a real threat to everyone's safety. You can imagine, as a police officer or anyone approaching anyone with one of these, you have no way of knowing that that thing is a replica. The consequences of that and what could happen are just life-altering. I think there's got to be a way of dealing with this, and the member's proposal is his best attempt to do this, and I hope he is successful. I certainly support his initiative here.

As you know, I've had a long-time pet peeve—even a peeve; it's a real point of anger: I can't believe the perpetual use of cars to transport guns throughout Ontario and the GTA. Just last night, there was another drive-by shooting of some people in the northwest part of Toronto. It's almost impossible for a police officer to convict anyone of having illegal firearms in their car or

truck, because they always have the valid excuse—they still say, "Oh, I borrowed the car from my Uncle Louis. I didn't know he had six shotguns in the trunk of the car." There's a case right now where a guy is before the courts; they found four illegal guns in his car, and he says, "I didn't know that the car that I was driving had four illegal guns. My friends may have brought them." This goes on without any repercussions from our Criminal Code, which doesn't take driving around with guns in cars as a serious enough offence. You can do it with no repercussions.

Anyway, I thank the member for his initiative here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Ajax—Pickering has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm pleased to acknowledge and thank the members from Simcoe North, Beaches—East York, York Centre, Oak Ridges—Markham, Northumberland—Quinte West and Eglinton—Lawrence.

I'd like to run a couple of things by you, and I ask that we not lose sight of this. First of all, there is the conversation and the quotation by the RCMP officer on the gun end of it, who indicated that any layman can convert this replica firearm to a real firearm quickly.

The Attorney General from three terms back did put forth regulation on this, which was altered by the government, and some of the stronger points he had in there were taken out. I can understand why they're not back in now, although it was one of the questions. The information went to community safety and correctional services. The information went to the Attorney General's office.

There's a bit of a groundswell out there. You'll see it as time marches on. Police chiefs and police services are asking for these changes, and I think we have to pay attention to them. They're the front-line men and women out there who provide safety for us 24/7, 365 days a year.

The positive things we as a government are doing is increased funding, and that's working well, taking guns off the street. It is time that purchasers take liability and responsibility.

I just want to leave you with one thought—I only mentioned it once when I was speaking—and that is, I never want to lose a child and I never want to lose a police officer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will vote on Mr. Dickson's ballot item in about 100 minutes.

## ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Loi concernant les



mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

RADON AWARENESS  
AND PREVENTION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION  
AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION  
CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Moridi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 182, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Moridi.

1420

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise in this House today to present you and my honourable colleagues with an initiative that will have an enormous effect on the lives of all Ontarians and their well-being.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted me in preparing this bill, including the staff at legislative counsel and my own staff. I would also like to acknowledge the late Dr. Delmar McCormack Smyth, the founder of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, who brought the first and only personal alpha dosimeter to Canada to monitor the Elliot Lake uranium workers for exposure to radon; and Dr. Fergal Nolan, president and CEO of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, who, over the past 30 years, has been tirelessly advocating across Canada for workers' safety in uranium and non-uranium mines and other workplaces, as well as the public's safety in homes and schools as it relates to radon exposure.

Bill 182, if passed, will certainly increase the level of safety in our dwellings and workplaces not only for us, but for generations to come.

I would like to begin by first providing some background and history on radon and its carcinogenic effects. Radon is a radioactive gas found naturally in the environment. It is produced by the decay of uranium found in soil, rock and water. When radon escapes from the bedrock into the outdoor air, it is so diluted that it poses a negligible threat to health. When radon gas is released into a building, it can accumulate to high levels in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.

Radon is an invisible, colourless, odourless, tasteless gas. You can't see it, you can't smell it and you can't taste it. It's a silent killer, and as any silent killer, it can seep into your home unnoticed until it is too late.

Studies have been conducted not only in Canada, but across the globe, showing that exposure to high levels of

radon in buildings has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number two cause of lung cancer after smoking. People who smoke and are exposed to radon have an even higher risk of lung cancer.

There have also been various studies which have confirmed that the cancer risk from exposure to radon in residential and other buildings is the same as exposure to radon in uranium mines. There is no safe level of radon.

There have been many studies designating radon gas as a cancer-causing agent. Many of my honourable colleagues may be aware that radon levels in underground uranium mines are predominantly high. However, it may interest you to know that studies have shown that residential and other buildings may have radon levels as high as a uranium mine. Radon can enter homes through tiny cracks in the foundation of homes and is present in most homes at some level. Radon further decays into radioactive products which release alpha particles into indoor air. Upon inhalation, alpha particles with sufficient energy enter into the lungs and have the potential to damage the DNA molecules in lung tissue. In other words, inhalation of radon increases your chance of developing lung cancer, similar to smoking cigarettes.

Current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 10% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco smoking.

As miners dig the uranium-bearing ore, they inevitably release large quantities of radioactive radon gas into the mine atmosphere. As uranium is present in almost every rock, non-uranium underground workers are also exposed to radon gas. Epidemiological studies of uranium miners and other underground miners have consistently shown that miners exposed to high levels of radon to be at increased risk of lung cancer.

These data, which are supported by animal and cellular studies, have resulted in the designation of radon as a known cause of cancer in humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. A combined analysis of 11 cohorts of over 60,000 underground miners conducted by Lubin et al and updated by the U.S. National Research Council provides a comprehensive assessment of lung cancer risks associated with radon.

There have been more than 220 documented deaths and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths in Elliot Lake uranium mines here in Ontario. It should be noted that the Elliot Lake uranium mines were closed down about 20 years ago. In 1974, the Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines pointed out that Elliot Lake uranium miners had already experienced twice as many lung cancers as then expected. Instances such as the ones at the Elliot Lake uranium mines and others around the country have had enormous financial and human costs. It's important to note that Ontario had one of the worst radon-related workplace disasters in the world.

Canada, through its high-grade uranium mines in Saskatchewan, is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium. Various engineering and radiological protec-



tion measures are in place, along with monitoring every single worker at these modern Saskatchewan uranium mines. That results in much better worker protection against exposure to radon in these mines.

Approximately 20,000 people die each year in Canada from lung cancer. Two thousand of these deaths are directly related to radon gas exposure in homes and other buildings. Of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths caused by radon in Canada, 40% take place here in Ontario. This results in 800 deaths per year in the province of Ontario due to indoor exposure to radon.

It may also interest my honourable colleagues to know that legislation such as I am proposing has been in place in other jurisdictions and countries for many years. In Quebec, radon testing in schools started last year. In 2009, province-wide testing began in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In Ontario we have had no policy in place to kick-start testing homes, schools or workplaces for the presence of radon gas.

Legislation passed in the United Kingdom has resulted in the creation of a comprehensive radon map for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. These maps have allowed the public and workers to identify radon-prone areas and test buildings for radon in order to take action to reduce radon levels in buildings, if needed.

Bill 182 is a comprehensive bill which not only requires government to ensure the safety of Ontarians in their buildings and workplaces, but also places an onus on the government to educate the public on radon and its health effects. Given the high number of deaths from lung cancer which are a direct result of radon, the public must be aware of the health implications of exposure to radon and the steps they can take in order to reduce levels of radon in buildings. This education can take place via various means, such as large-scale advertising and public awareness campaigns.

Children who are exposed to radon will unfortunately have a much higher chance of developing lung cancer than those who are exposed to radon in later stages of their lives, as there is a 10- to 15-year latency period between exposure to radon and development of cancer. With this knowledge in hand, we must ensure that all public schools in Ontario are safe and that our children are radon-free.

The Ontario radon registry will be established with the passing of Bill 182. All testing results from publicly and privately owned buildings will be filtered through this registry.

This registry will begin to create a mapping of the levels of radon across the province, similar to maps created in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

1430

As a government, we have taken every step to reduce lung cancer due to smoking, and different levels of government have placed legislation to reduce Ontarians' exposure to carcinogenic agents.

By ensuring the successful passing of this bill, we can continue on the path to a healthier Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

Just stop the clock for a moment. The honourable member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your indulgence. If the other members don't mind, we have some special guests—they're only here for another half-hour and I wanted to introduce them.

We have Umberto Vattani, the president of the Italian Trade Commission; we have Antonio Lucarelli, the Italian trade commissioner of Canada; and we have Jimmy Johnson, the senior trade analyst for the Italian Trade Commission.

Welcome, in particular, Umberto Vattani, who has come from Italy. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Welcome to Queen's Park.

The member for Wellington-Halton Hills will have his full time.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I, too, wish to welcome our guests into the legislative chamber this afternoon.

I'm pleased to have the chance to speak briefly to Bill 182, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, which has been brought forward by the member for Richmond Hill. I know that my caucus colleague and friend the member for Durham hopes to speak to it as well, on behalf of our party, this afternoon.

I listened to the member from Richmond Hill as he introduced the bill and gave his presentation, and I want to compliment him on his remarks. We all know that we're coming to the end of the 39th Parliament, and it's hard to know which private members' bills might be part of the package that might actually see their way into passage into law at the end. We'll see about that.

I certainly want to wish the member for Richmond Hill well, because I know he is obviously very well intentioned in bringing this forward. The bill is being brought forward in a non-partisan way, and I would commend him for that as well. Especially as we get close to the election, the partisanship around here gets a little more acute, shall we say, and the fact that the member has brought this forward in a non-partisan way, not attacking anybody, is something that is worthy of recognition. I've tried to do that sometimes with private members' bills too, and I think that's the way to do it. This is a serious issue, and we acknowledge that. We commend the member for bringing it forward.

On this side of the House, we know that high radon levels have been linked to serious health risks. The member talked about the fact that radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer. I know people who have, unfortunately, been afflicted with lung cancer who never smoked, who never had someone in the house who smoked, so in all likelihood they weren't exposed to a great deal of second-hand smoke over an extended period of time. It's possible that I know people who have had to face this terrible illness because of radon. We have an understanding and awareness of that on this side of the House, obviously, and we believe that this legislation must reflect that the measurable level of radon will protect Ontarians as much as possible.



In terms of the discussion of this bill, I think it's important to point out that this bill would amend the Building Code Act, 1992, to provide for the establishment of the Ontario radon registry. The act would require radon measurement specialists and laboratories to provide the registry with specified information, and the minister would be required to educate the public about radon, in addition to encouraging homeowners to measure radon levels. I think that's a very important aspect of the bill. Greater education, led by the minister, would certainly be in the public interest, in my view.

The minister is also required to ensure that radon levels in every provincially owned dwelling are measured and that remedial action is taken where necessary. Owners of enclosed workplaces would also be required, as I understand it, to ensure that radon levels are measured and remedial action is taken, if necessary.

The Building Code Act would further be amended to provide authority for regulations that require dwellings to be constructed in a way that minimizes radon entry and facilitates post-construction radon removal. The minister is required to review any such requirements within five years after the day this act comes into force.

The only concern I would want to bring forward is that we have to remember our business community, obviously, in the context of any new regulations that are coming forward. I've had a number of meetings with small business people in the last few months. Of course, they recognize that they have an obligation to adhere to the letter and the spirit of all the laws and all the regulations, but the fact is, in recent years—and I don't want to be overly partisan—there have been, really, a huge number of regulations and new legislation coming forward that have affected small business, and there's a limit to which small business can deal with this kind of regulation.

If you think of the smallest of businesses, whether it's a single proprietorship or two people working together in a partnership—and we must remember that every business starts small, usually with the vision of one entrepreneur or a small group of people working in partnership. The smallest of businesses don't have a lot of time to deal with government. They're out there trying to work with their customers and trying to find new customers to grow their business. For the smallest of businesses, every hour that's spent or taken up by government regulation, government forms and those sorts of things directly inhibits their ability to grow. That's something we always have to keep in mind in a general sense. And I don't say it just with respect to this bill, but I think we need to remember that in terms of our awareness of the importance of the small business sector.

Another key consideration with respect to this bill is our recognition that radon is a radioactive, colourless, odourless and tasteless gas. Occurring naturally from the decay of uranium, it's considered to be a health hazard due to its radioactivity, and evidence shows a link between breathing high concentrations of radon and the incidence of lung cancer. As we said, radon exposure in homes and buildings can particularly accumulate in con-

finied areas such as attics and basements. Measures such as increasing under-floor ventilation and sealing cracks and gaps in the floors of buildings can help address radon concentrations from seeping into the building.

We also know that radon test kits are available. A do-it-yourself kit costs approximately \$40 dollars, and a 24/7 monitor is about \$170.

Again, I want to commend the member for Richmond Hill for bringing forward this bill. I think it's brought forward in the spirit of a good private member's bill, where we have a chance to discuss an issue that otherwise might not be brought forward on to the floor of the Legislature. The member deserves credit for that. I hope his colleagues in government will find a way to ensure that the issues that he raises this afternoon are in fact addressed in terms of government policy, and I wish him well going forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I preface my remarks at the outset by saying that I will be supporting this bill, but I think there are simpler ways for Ontario to get there than through the passage of this bill.

As has been said by my colleague speaking immediately before me, these are the dying days of this Legislature. We're only here for a couple of more weeks, and the opportunity for this bill or any bill at this point to make it through committee and third reading is limited.

In fact, there is a way for the government to very easily put in the safeguards that ought to have been done a long time ago when it comes to radon gas: simply through the building code of Ontario. That can be done and is done every year by regulation, but there does not seem to have been a will to do so in the past. It's a sad reflection of Ontario and what Ontario has thought about radon gas vis-à-vis other jurisdictions.

The provincial building code in Ontario has one of the highest levels of acceptance of radon gas of any jurisdiction in Canada. Therefore, in Ontario, we are told that it is safer to breathe a higher concentration of radon gas in our homes, our buildings, our places of work, our schools, our institutions, our museums or private places where people go than almost anywhere else in Canada.

The National Building Code has a much lower threshold for the ingestion of radon gas than we have here in Ontario. For us to be proactive, all we would have to do in Ontario in the building code is develop the national code. That's all we would have to do. We would lessen the dangers to every single person in Ontario immediately. Never mind doing all this other stuff. With the stroke of a pen from the minister—adopt the national code, and therefore, the amount of radon gas that would be allowed in people's homes or public institutions would be reduced substantially. If we bring our building code in compliance with that, Ontarians will have less exposure to radon. Of course, we've all known about this gas for a long time; uranium was mined extensively in Ontario in places like Elliot Lake and less extensively in other places a little bit closer to this Legislature.



1440

In just a little personal aside, I know that my parents for many years after they retired from here in Toronto lived in a little town just south of Bancroft, called Cardiff. Cardiff, Ontario, was a totally artificial town that did not exist at all until one day the Bicroft mine was located south of Cardiff, and they mined uranium for a number of years in the 1950s and 1960s. All of the homes in this little town were owned by miners or people who worked in the mine, around the mine or for the mine, and when the mine stopped producing and the market was gone for uranium in Ontario—we found that it was cheaper to import it from Saskatchewan—of course, the mine closed. The miners left, the homes came up for sale, and they were filled—surprise, surprise—by a lot of retired people who were looking for cheaper housing. But I do know that my own parents, when they bought this house, were somewhat concerned and had the home tested, as did everybody in town, for the existence of radon gas, and they found out that literally every one of the 600 or so people who lived there was exposed to higher concentrations of radon gas than the National Building Code would permit. However, I think it was in line at that point, or pretty close to in line, with what the Ontario building code permitted. It's just an example of how you can live in a place and not understand that there is a silent killer. For them, they quite wisely took it upon themselves to more properly ventilate the house, and that's all that was required. The proper ventilation of the house, once people became aware of it, was all that was required to bring the home into compliance with the code.

Now, in March of this year, the Canadian Cancer Society made a submission towards the building code about radon gas limits, and I'd like to quote in part what they had to say in the submission, because I think it was very wise and sage advice, and some of that has found its way into the member's private member's bill. They said:

"The proposed changes to the building code support our mission and vision by preventing Ontarians from exposure to a known cancer-causing substance.

"Radon is estimated to be responsible for approximately 2,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada.

"In Ontario, radon is a serious issue. In the first year of the cross-Canada residential radon survey, 5% of Ontario homes tested had radon levels above the guideline recommended by Health Canada." That's serious. That means one in 20 homes has a radon level higher than the guideline of Health Canada.

"More research in year two of the study will provide more data, but at this point, it is clear that Ontario has a radon problem that needs to be addressed. Exposure to radon is not confined to homes in certain regions.... If a vapour barrier is already planned, adding a vent to prevent radon gas from accumulating may cost as little as \$50."

They said a lot more than that, but I think that was the important part of what they had to say. Again, I go back to the building code. I go back to what could be done

should this bill not make it through third reading. We would implore the minister responsible for the building code to take a look at the very small effort that could be made to give force and effect to what this honourable member is attempting to do.

In the meantime, before we can set up a registry and search out all the houses and do all the other things he is talking about, simply change the building code so that the level of radon gas would be reduced, and allow for minor modifications to be made that would cost as little as \$50, or the implementation of a vapour barrier which would protect people from a known carcinogen.

In 2007, Health Canada recommended a new threshold for maximum annual average radon concentration lower than the current one in Ontario, and the 2010 edition of the model national building code includes enhanced radon protection provisions. So here in Ontario, that is all we would have to do: just adopt what the federal government recommended in 2007 and did in 2010. The government's own ministry builds a case for the need to change our building code to be in line with the National Building Code.

Just to conclude, because I think everything that needs to be said has been, I would encourage the government to update the Ontario building code to match the federal building code in relation to acceptable radon levels immediately. This can be done through regulations. It can be done immediately.

In the meantime, I am more than happy to support this member and his initiative. He has brought again to the light of this Legislature something that needs to be done. We can collectively, as a Legislature, pass this bill. We can send it to committee. We can send it hoping somehow that it will get third reading. But I would also ask the government members here—you have two caucus days left. They come on Tuesdays. There are two of them left before this Parliament winds up on June 2. Please use them to talk about private members' bills, this one and other ones. Please use them to say that a lot of good ideas have been debated here on Thursday afternoons, including this one. If all of the bills cannot be passed and if a negotiated deal cannot be made to pass those bills, use other methods to have them passed. The building code can pass the radon level. The building code can put fire sprinklers in old-age homes. There are other methods other than these private members' bills, and please, please, especially the government members, take those opportunities.

For those of us in opposition—and it has been said that I am the dean of opposition members; I am the one who has been here the longest who has never been in government. It is I. But you know, I wish I had some of these levers that you have. I do not have the levers, standing on this side of the House that the government members have, and you have three weeks left to exercise them. Please go to the caucus and exercise them. Make sure that these bills are passed. Make sure that Ontarians are saved from the exposure to radon gas. It is the least we can do to support this member and to support what he



is trying to do. It is good for all Ontarians. I commend him for bringing it forward, and you, sir, will have my vote when it comes due in about an hour.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Larry O'Connor, the member for Durham–York in the 35th Parliament.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm very pleased to rise today in the House in support of my honourable colleague the MPP for Richmond Hill's bill, Bill 182.

Bill 182 will not only educate Ontarians; it would also help reduce the number of deaths related to radon. As we have heard, of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths each year, 40% are radon-related. With the passing of this bill, we can ensure that our children, who are the most vulnerable to radon, are protected and aware of its existence.

I would like to mention a few of the health risks involved with radon. Radon has come to be known as a silent killer that has had a great effect on the number of annual lung cancer patients. Lifelong smokers who are not exposed to radon have a one in eight chance of getting lung cancer. If you add the exposure of radon, the risk of lung cancer for smokers increases to one in three. While smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer, I was very surprised to learn today that radon is the second, and the leading cause of lung cancers for non-smokers. Unless we take the opportunity to educate Ontarians as to where radon can be found, as it is odourless and colourless, as we heard, radon will continue to kill people.

**1450**

In Canada, the provincial government has jurisdiction over the health effects of background radiation. With that being said, the provincial Legislature has yet to take proper measures to ensure that our residents, our citizens, are well educated and aware of the presence and harm of radon. It is therefore our duty to take action on this silent killer.

Radon takes 10 to 15 years to develop in the lungs, causing our children to be at the highest risk of radon exposure and eventually becoming victims of it. The health risks of radon are long-term and are not immediate, which is why the passing of this bill will ensure a better tomorrow for generations to come.

Bill 182 will not only inspect old buildings but will provide regulations for new buildings to protect Ontarians, as I mentioned, for years and years and generations to come.

The existence of radon comes about from dwellings and cracks. The most prominent locations of radon are in mines and residential buildings. This is another surprise: There are no safe levels of radon, and it has been proven that many buildings have radon levels equivalent to that of a uranium mine. That is astonishing.

Radon is seeping into buildings from the ground. Indoor radon exposure can be reduced by increasing ventilation and improving building materials, so it's very simple. Exposure is reduced with routine radon monitoring of building materials and building locations. With the passing of Bill 182, we can implement proper inspection

procedures to ensure that Ontarians across our province are protected from exposure to radon.

Testing for radon is easy and inexpensive, making the implementation of this bill even more advantageous and beneficial for Ontarians. Other jurisdictions have already implemented regulations with regard to radon exposure. As a leading province in the country and worldwide, we must follow these steps to protect the people from this invisible poison.

Implementation of Bill 182 will allow us to gather information and create a map of where radon exposure is at its peak in Ontario, and educate the public of where homes should be built. As of yet, no map locating radon levels exists, and Ontario, as a leader, can take the first step to ensure that such a map comes into existence. Ontarians have the right to know of its existence, and it must be a part of our mandate, as elected officials, to inform our constituents of its presence in their homes.

While as a government we have taken many measures to reduce lung cancer caused by smoking, we have yet to take measures to prevent lung cancer from its second leading cause. Bill 182 is embedded with many advantages, such as the registry, which will allow the government to control and protect these areas; the inspection procedures for building new homes; and the awareness of radon that can be brought to attention, more specifically in schools.

People are more and more concerned with the environment and the negative effects of its chemicals on their health, making the passing of this bill even more crucial than before. The successful passing of this bill will show that we are on a path to a healthier and better tomorrow for all Ontarians.

I'm very proud to support this bill for a healthier future for my constituents, for our children and for our grandchildren. I want to congratulate my colleague for bringing this bill forward. I will obviously be supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** With your indulgence, I'll take a privilege here—the member from Trinity–Spadina had a privilege with the time as well. I just wanted to introduce a friend of mine who was here and left. He was with the CF. Paul Arsenault is the past president of CF Canada, and he volunteered in my community for 25 years. I just wanted to recognize him for the record.

On Bill 182, I do want to extend my congratulations to Dr. Moridi, and I say that with deliberate intent; he has a Ph.D. in physics, I believe, and is highly respected. I think it's important to recognize the member from Richmond Hill.

This bill to raise awareness about the Ontario radon registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces is very commendable. We would want to be on the record, on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, of being in support of the bill.

Arguments have been made about the climate of silly season we're in, moving in towards an election, where



serious business often isn't taken seriously. But I think this debate this afternoon is important. It's important to move forward on initiatives like this. As part of the intent of the bill, if I look at the preamble, the minister is required to educate the public about radon and to encourage homeowners to measure radon levels in their homes and take remedial action, if necessary. That's really a public service that we're doing today, which is the intent of the bill, to the greatest extent. So I commend the member. Never be daunted by the mood of this place. Move forward on principle, and I think you will serve both your constituents and, indeed, the province—and you have the skills to do that effectively.

I would only say that in researching the bill—and most of the comments have been made by many speakers. Radon is an invisible, odourless, radioactive gas. It is formed by the disintegration of radium, which is a decay product of uranium. Radon emits alpha particles and produces several solid radioactive products called radon daughters—you know all this.

I had the privilege of looking up, in a little more than necessary detail, comments with respect to some of the people you mentioned in your opening remarks. This was a study done in January 2005—you're probably very familiar with that study—Radon in Homes and Risk of Lung Cancer: Collaborative Analysis of Individual Data from 13 European Case-control Studies. Some of the documents you mentioned were part of that.

It's important for me today, it's important for my constituents in Durham, to understand fully. If I look not far down the road, in Port Hope, there are issues with respect to radon gas there as well. There have been for some time in the community. It's very important. One of the things one of the speakers mentioned in their remarks with respect to schools and public buildings is in there.

I commend you: I think you've planted the seed. Eventually, you will harvest the products of your effort sometime in the future—probably when we're government. I say that with a great sense of humour because there is an election this year.

I think worthy causes should continue on in the order paper. If you happen to not be here, I'd like to introduce the bill, and I will make reference to that—if I happen to be here. But anyway, all of that is in good jest, because I think we want to make sure we do perform some of the functions here today.

Radioactive lining: "After radon gas is inhaled, it readily dissolves in the blood and circulates through the body, organs, and tissues, until it is again exhaled through the lungs or skin. Equilibrium is established between the ambient and the internal radon concentrations. Since the radioactive half time of radon-222 is 3.8 days, most radon atoms harmlessly leave the body before they can disintegrate."

However: "The glow of ionizing radiation

"Most of the radiation dose to humans is not from radon itself but from the radon daughters, most notably polonium-218." It's a very technical area but, nonetheless, when you look at it, it's disintegrating uranium. You

look at how easily we assume these things and how important—even one particle could actually cause cancer. That's really what this study says.

I commend the member and, as I said before, I think that by this debate this afternoon you have made a contribution. We will be supporting it. Then it goes back to the government.

Now, with all due respect, I want to spend a few minutes speaking to the member in the chair. The member from Oxford has a bill, Bill 69, and it is actually before one of the standing committees, I think, to be called for business. The bill is entitled the Hawkins Gignac Act, and it was in response to the carbon monoxide poisoning of the Hawkins family in Woodstock. That bill was introduced in 2009 and, member from Oxford, the preamble and the intent of the bill are almost the same.

If we're promoting a public service here today, the important thing is for the viewers, the Hansard and ourselves, as participants representing the people of Ontario, to be aware that carbon monoxide is also colourless and odourless. It can kill. The Hawkins Gignac Act is trying to do the same thing as you are.

I think both bills—if Premier McGuinty wanted to do a noble thing on his last effort before October 6, he would convene these bills, because this will be passed this afternoon, and make them law for the people of Ontario—

1500

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It is certainly a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces, introduced by my friend and colleague the member for Richmond Hill. As has been noted, he has a Ph.D. in physics and I know is extremely well respected within the radiation safety community.

As a physician, I really do have to emphasize the health effects of radon, particularly, of course, lung cancer deaths due to radon. The numbers have been spoken of in this House, and perhaps some people might even be skeptical of figures like 10% of lung cancer deaths being due to radon. It's not just Canada that has looked at this, of course; it is a serious issue that has been looked at in many other jurisdictions, and they've come to very much the same conclusions. In the US, 10% to 15% of all lung cancers are due to radon, and the European community is actually a little higher, at 15% of all lung cancers. This could very well be related to the exposure in those individual jurisdictions because, as we've heard, it depends very much on where you live, where you work, where you might be exposed.

This does translate into some 2,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada due to radon. By extrapolation and assuming equal exposure, this would mean some 800 deaths a year in Ontario alone due to radon exposure.

I'd like to thank the members of the Canadian Cancer Society. They're with us here today. They certainly made



a major point of radon education in their lobby day recently here at Queen's Park, and I know the member for Richmond Hill took that very much to heart in the preparation of this bill.

Looking at what the regulations are in terms of Canada, as has been noted, there is no formal regulation. However, Health Canada, along with the Federal Provincial Territorial Radiation Protection Committee, did develop radon guidelines some time ago. I think it's especially noteworthy that, in fact, the guideline was reduced from 800 becquerels per cubic metre of air to 200 becquerels per cubic metre of air in 2007. Clearly people are following the science. This particular committee is looking at this issue seriously and did make a significant adjustment to what they felt was a safe exposure.

The fact is that there is legislation that does relate to radiation in certain circumstances. As an example, workers in the nuclear energy industry, those who may be exposed to x-rays, those who work in uranium mines—there is some federal legislation, and our provincial occupational health and safety legislation does follow that type of secure measure for workers in these cases.

It really is quite ironic that dwellings, in other words, where people live and even where people congregate—members of the public obviously congregate in institutions such as schools, hospitals, long-term-care facilities and correctional facilities. Clearly, these areas need, I think, more than guidelines, and I think this legislation does a great deal to address this current deficiency.

I'm very fortunate in that one of my constituents, Mr. Bob Wood—and I noticed that Bob and Maureen are here with us in the public gallery—is an individual who alerted me to this issue a couple of years ago. Bob has been in construction for the last 30 years and is a plumber by trade and a certified home inspector. In relation to this particular bill, Bob is one of a handful of National Environmental Health Association-certified radon gas technicians in Canada and is listed on the national Radon Information Speakers Bureau.

What Bob has been telling me about is exactly what is necessary to do in terms of testing radon levels in your home in order to potentially mitigate the effect on your family. As has been mentioned, construction techniques are extremely important. There needs to be an analysis not only of the radon levels, but a complete soil permeability test to see what possibly could be coming through the basement floor. This, obviously, is very dependent on the type of construction, the age of the building, and so on.

It is relatively simple to have your home tested, an analysis of your potential exposure, and then the opportunity to mitigate. There are many measures that can be taken. The member for Beaches–East York alluded to some. One that Bob told me all about was active soil depressurization. This methodology actually also removes methane gases and pesticides that might be entering your home.

The best of all, of course, is prevention. Mitigation is possible, as I've just been explaining, but I think the

aspect of the member for Richmond Hill's proposal that is so important is the amendment to the Building Code Act of 1992.

Clearly, prevention is always better than cure. I urge all members of this House to support this important bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, the honourable member for Richmond Hill has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills, Beaches–East York, York South–Weston, Durham and Oak Ridges–Markham for their contributions to the debate on this bill.

As noted here, radon is a carcinogen and there's no scientific doubt about the fact that radon is the second major cause of lung cancer among people, and also in animals. In Canada every year, about 20,000 people are dying of lung cancer, and in Ontario, 800 lung cancers every year are due to exposure to radon in buildings, homes, schools and other workplaces. This is a huge number when you look at the human cost of lung cancer and also it's really a tragedy when a person goes through this disease. Lung cancer is a terrible disease.

One of my family members actually lost her life as a result of lung cancer and I know that it's a terrible disease. Its pressure on the health care system is enormous. Can you imagine how much we pay through our health care system to take care of lung cancer patients?

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill. By passing this bill, hopefully we'll prevent the unnecessary occurrence of lung cancer among Ontarians and we will save lives. It's very easy to test your home or your school for radon gas. I urge all the school boards to take the initiative. Don't even wait for the passage of this bill, take the initiative and test all your schools for radon gas, as it is very crucial. The lives of our children are the most important and precious things for all of us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mr. Moridi's bill in about 50 minutes.

## ADULT EDUCATION

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should explore the feasibility of expanding Eldercollege, or similar programs in Ontario, in order to serve adults over the age of 55 who wish to enrich their lifestyle through active involvement education.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'm pleased to bring forward this resolution which asks the government to consider supporting and expanding a truly innovative program for seniors in Ontario. I will get into the details of my proposal shortly.

My mother-in-law, Jean Thorne, has a saying which is quite common. She says, "If you don't use it, you will lose it." She reads books, subscribes to three different



daily newspapers for the crosswords and participates in activities at her seniors' centre in Whitby. She has learned how to do things like wood carving, line dancing, paper trolls and scrapbooking. My mother-in-law will turn 90 this year and I'm sure that her commitment to constantly challenge herself to learn plays a huge part in her longevity and her quality of health and life.

1510

I was elected as a trustee to the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in 1997 and served on that school board until I was elected to Queen's Park in 2009. We spent a lot of time on the board working to promote lifelong learning in our community. Education for me has always been something that I pursue every day. I try to learn something new every day. We prided ourselves at the school board on the programs that we offered to area children. Teachers were encouraged to be innovative, and we established a program enhancement fund to support their ideas. The adult education centres run by the board offered courses for more than 1,000 people in a half-dozen locations, people who, for the most part, were looking to complete their secondary school.

People have asked me what we have for seniors in terms of education. Most seniors do not really like attending college or university with young people. It can be intimidating. Campuses are large and not necessarily senior-friendly. Parking is not always convenient and is usually quite pricey. Campuses are centrally located and not always easy to get to, especially in rural Ontario.

I've spent quite a bit of time since being elected as the MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock visiting senior centres and talking to seniors. I co-host a series of senior seminars each spring with my federal counterpart which provide information to seniors about programs and services specifically for seniors. These will be taking place in June in Lindsay, Millbrook, Beaverton, Haliburton and Apsley around my riding. Many seniors have asked me about courses for seniors, especially in rural areas. The more I looked into this request, the more I have come to realize that there is a huge need and a lack of options when it comes to continued learning for seniors. As our population ages, this need will only get bigger.

Recent research by neurobiologists at the University of California, Irvine campus, is providing more evidence that learning promotes brain health and therefore mental stimulation that could limit the debilitating effects of aging on the memory and the mind. Researcher Christine Gall found that everyday forms of learning animate neuron receptors that help keep brain cells functioning at optimum levels. Her research suggests that staying mentally active as we age can keep the brain in good shape, which may limit memory and cognitive decline.

It was while looking into lifelong learning and programs for seniors that I learned about a great program that has existed in British Columbia for over 20 years. It is called Eldercollege. Eldercollege is an established and thriving program in British Columbia. One example is at Capilano University in north Vancouver. Eldercollege is

a community of individuals age 55-plus with a zest for learning and exploring life. At Eldercollege, they foster an environment where it's easy to share ideas, socialize and learn for the sheer enjoyment of learning. There are no exams, no deadlines and no pressure. Each term, they offer a mix of courses that are as eclectic as your interests. Nominal fees are charged, courses are taught by volunteers, and courses can range from one to six weeks, usually once a week. This program has been embraced by seniors in BC and has spread across the province.

As we prepare in Ontario and, indeed, across Canada for the aging of our population, this is an idea whose time has surely come. While doing research on this great program from BC, I was made aware of the launch of a similar Eldercollege program in Windsor, Ontario. It is affiliated with Canterbury College, an affiliate college of the University of Windsor. The program is being championed by Dr. C. Lloyd Brown-John, professor emeritus. I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Brown-John last week about the program that they are developing in Windsor, and I will attempt to try to capture what they are doing, but I guarantee that I will not be able to do it with anywhere near the enthusiasm that the doctor had when telling me about his vision for Eldercollege in the Windsor area.

They are proposing to develop Eldercollege under the auspices of Canterbury College, an affiliate of the college of the University of Windsor. In the long term, they hope to be able to offer Eldercollege courses in a number of pod locations in Windsor and throughout Essex and west Kent counties.

So what is Eldercollege? Eldercollege provides learning opportunities for older adults who wish to enrich their lifestyle through active involvement and education and to contribute to the social and cultural development of the community. Eldercollege participants design and offer quality educational activities to stimulate interest in learning and to provide a forum for sharing ideas, knowledge and social experience with others. Members can lead study groups, serve on the Eldercollege board and its committees, be study group participants and, most importantly, take courses. Activities are both planned and operated by members to maintain a high-quality offering at a minimum cost.

So what types of courses are offered? In duration, courses can run from one half-day to not more than six sessions over one to three weeks. Courses will be developed by facilitators and may be offered by those same facilitators or by others as guests arranged by the facilitator. Courses are offered only during weekdays and never in the evenings or on weekends. Courses will be offered in locations more convenient to persons over age 55, such as libraries, community centres, seniors' centres and residences, recreation centres and such other locations as may both suit a course or be arranged by a facilitator.

Diversity of courses is what makes the Eldercollege concept so appealing. Examples of courses offered at Capilano University include Incredible Journeys—travel



adventures; Gourmet Club—six restaurants host do-it-yourself gourmet lunches; The Leading Edge—new and creative ideas; Pivotal Events in 20th-Century History; North American/Canadian History; Wonderful World of Wine; 21st-Century Technology; my favourite course title, Computers for Scaredy-Cats; What's New—Current Affairs; Opera Highlights; Crime and Justice; A Geological Walk; Lawn Bowling for Beginners; Eldercollege Music Mornings; Local Art and Artists; Six Great 19th-Century Novels; The Universe—Stars and Planets.

Eldercollege could not exist without money and in-kind donations. Rarely, for example, would any payment be offered for facilitating a course. It is driven by volunteer work. But to sustain Eldercollege will require funding. Funding can come from several sources. Ultimately, Dr. Brown-John feels that there will need to be a full- or part-time office at Canterbury College responsible for all aspects of the Eldercollege program delivery, including publications, advertising, course scheduling, liaison with the University of Windsor, liaison with sponsors, finance and accounting, course registrations and much more.

Any person taking a course or courses will pay a membership fee. For example, Capilano University offers the following membership fees: a one-course charge of \$72, or a multiple-course charge—take as many as you like—of \$135. They would propose to do much the same thing in Windsor with a membership fee.

Government grants: They are pursuing financial support from the province. They have requested bridge financing for three to five years and are awaiting the provincial response. Grants from other agencies such as the Trillium Foundation will be pursued once they have an Eldercollege program in place and operational.

For sponsorships, companies interested in supporting the Eldercollege concept, such as retirement centre management companies, will be invited to become sponsors. Sponsors may also donate in-kind, including services, facilities and essential supplies.

Donations: Of course, Eldercollege would benefit from individual donations, including estate donations. Such donations to Eldercollege would be administered in trust by Canterbury College.

The logistics of course delivery: Courses are arranged or delivered by facilitators. A course facilitator can offer an entire course or part of a course, or arrange to have others deliver the course or segments of a course. Courses could be as short as one half-day or as many as six sessions over a one- to three-week period. Generally, a course should attract a number of people, although certain courses may require limited enrolments.

Courses are always offered between approximately 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. No courses are offered on weekends or evenings because they don't want members to drive in rush-hour traffic or at night.

Courses are offered in diverse and, hopefully, convenient locations. For example, courses could be scheduled in public libraries; seniors' residential centres; community centres, both seniors' and recreational; wineries;

restaurants; or wherever enough interested people can gather to offer a viable and valuable course.

Some courses would require a small supplementary fee; for example, a gourmet food course held in a restaurant. Some courses may also necessitate a small honorarium for a special guest participant, to possibly cover travel expenses. Normally, neither facilitators nor guest participants would be remunerated. This is all about volunteerism.

A key component of the Eldercollege program is its curriculum committee. Do you have an idea for a course you would like to take or a course you would like to facilitate? Then develop your idea as a proposal to be considered by the curriculum committee. Remember, there will be no assignments, no exams and no credits towards anything but yourself.

Who are the course facilitators? Well, actually, anybody could be one. Facilitating a course does not mean teaching a course. Rather, it means organizing and delivering a course. The course may feature you or it could feature one or more people you have recruited to deliver the course. If you want to take a course on astronomy but you don't know anything about it, find somebody who can help you.

How would one get a course developed? Prepare a proposed course outline and submit it to the local curriculum committee.

What is being proposed by Dr. Lloyd Brown-John for the Windsor area is one of the most exciting things that I have heard for seniors in Ontario in years. The doctor and his team are taking a great program from BC and making it uniquely Ontarian by expanding courses into rural communities. Instead of people going to the courses, they are planning to bring the courses to them in their communities. This means accessible parking, short terms, low-traffic times, a comfortable learning environment with other seniors, courses that encourage community involvement, classes held in wineries, libraries, seniors' centres etc. Everyone involved is a volunteer, and money generated by the program would go back into the program. It's flexible and self-sustaining.

**1520**

So why am I asking for the government to seriously consider supporting this program and expanding the idea across the province? It's simple: This program can fill a void in things that are offered for our elders at very little cost. As I said earlier, research shows that it is good for our brains to be stimulated by learning. Education at any age is like exercise for the brain, but it is extremely important as we age. Studies suggest that staying mentally active as we age may limit memory and cognitive decline.

We have so many professional people retiring now, with so many more soon to follow. How great would it be to take advantage of the years of experience and knowledge by bringing that hands-on experience into the lives of others in our community? There are people in this room today who will soon be moving into retirement who would be great teachers or facilitators of courses on



government or public affairs, and it would be such a waste to not tap into this resource.

In closing, I hope the Legislature will support my resolution to give serious consideration to supporting and expanding this wonderful learning experience across the province. I know that seniors or elders in my riding would jump at the chance to get involved. As my mother-in-law always says, "If you don't use it, you will lose it." So let's not lose this great opportunity to enrich the lives of our seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the House the honourable Shelley Martel, member for Sudbury East in the 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, and the member for Nickel Belt in the 37th and 38th Parliaments. Welcome, Shelley.

Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I also welcome Shelley. She was very highly respected when here as the health critic. She was probably one of the best.

I would only say that this proposal that Mr. Johnson from the city of Kawartha Lakes has introduced, I would be supportive of it 100%. In fact, our caucus would be supportive of it 100%. I'm sure all members would be, quite honestly, and I guess I have a bit of a prejudice to it all. I'm probably one of the oldest ones here, and I hope to continue serving.

I consider this chamber one of the highest institutes of learning that I've ever had the experience of working in. Quite honestly, I feel humbled each day, even today, with a Ph.D. professor here, and earlier today we had a couple of doctors on fighting disease. We had the privilege last week of being in a conference on aging in Quebec City, and it was quite informative in terms of active living. As you said, "Stay active. Use it or lose it." Those were very appropriate comments.

I'm speaking primarily because our critic for colleges and universities, Mr. Wilson, is in the chair, and he gave me the opportunity and the privilege to speak as long as I wish for this afternoon. He's the Chair, so I get as much time as I really want.

Now, this is in a climate—it's very appropriate timing, because today I was invited to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. The president of the university, Ron Bordessa, is retiring. Dr. Bordessa is a friend. I would say that I know him quite well. I've apologized; I have sent my best wishes to him, and I know Wayne Arthurs and probably other members of the Legislature from Durham and other places will be there, because Dr. Bordessa was highly regarded. I think he came from York University prior to that. He's a great and wonderful guy who's taken the University of Ontario Institute of Technology to the next level.

It's quite interesting, too, the climate here on this looking at and respecting institutions of learning—which we all do; other people say other things, but we all do. We may have different approaches to things, but we all respect institutes of learning.

There's a very interesting celebration: 10 years of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I was very

happy to be part of a government that created the first university in I believe it was 40 years. Prior to that, it was Trent University, which was also under a Conservative government—not to take any credit, because these are usually unanimously supported moves for creating institutions.

In greatest respect, I can remember the process, because it's actually in my riding, or it was in my riding at that time. The founder, the person who founded it and planted the very first seed of this project and this vision, was Dr. Gary Polonsky. I give him the greatest credit and the greatest respect.

There's a wonderful article, which I'm looking at here. It says:

"To University of Ontario ... founder Gary Polonsky, a handshake means a promise kept.

"The inexhaustible chief cheerleader for UOIT"—referring to Gary—"already a successful education executive as president of Durham College, made the solemn promise a decade ago to then-Ontario Premier Mike Harris when he shook his hand and vowed to make what was little more than a dearly held idea a bricks and mortar reality.

"Today, as UOIT marks 10 years in Durham region, Mr. Polonsky can take time to reflect," and he does in the article I'm reading.

He gives full respect to Jim Flaherty, who is now the Minister of Finance—hopefully he returns as Minister of Finance—because he pushed that through cabinet. There's no question, no discussion: Polonsky had the vision, Flaherty had the energy and the rest is history to the extent that the cabinet of the day supported that. Dr. Polonsky, as the founder, and then Dr. Bordessa taking it to a whole new level is commendable.

These are access points to further learning at all age groups. I finished my degree as a mature student. I started as an immature student and had to take a sabbatical—in fact, this is the real story. I was more interested in playing hockey than in studying, but I did eventually finish. There's every evidence that even today I think I'm a better member through learning and understanding than I was in 1995 when I was first elected.

The new president—this is another important announcement today; I'll make a more formal definition of this when this actually happens—Dr. Tim McTiernan, the replacement for Dr. Bordessa, will be the third president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ontario, UOIT, effective July 1, 2011. That has been formally announced, and I congratulate and commend him. Actually, I believe he is from the University of Toronto. He has "more than 25 years of senior-level ... administrative experience spanning the areas of innovation, research administration and commercialization" at the University of Toronto. So he has a great deal of experience, and I'm sure he'll take us to a whole other level.

I look at the intent here. What we're trying to do is engage people in lifelong learning and deal with the issue of the aging tsunami. I really believe that when you stop doing something, like being elected, you're never doing



it again. It's a frightening revelation when you think of it. When you say, "I can no longer cut the grass, drive a car or be a member," that means it's the last time you're doing it. Each day we have is a gift, and I think learning is part of growing, and actually growing to understand yourself, at the end of time.

I have great respect for the people I work with in my community. Last month, I guess it was, we celebrated volunteerism. I knew the Rickard family, a highly regarded family in the community, farm families but also community leaders in the general, broadest sense. I was so impressed, because Brenton Rickard, one of the leaders at the Newcastle Community Hall, which was the Massey family fortress, if you will—Massey tractors was in Newcastle, and that's where they lived. They donated the Massey house in Newcastle, a beautiful building. Brenton Rickard was chair of that for many, many years.

Brenton passed away a couple of years ago, but his wife, Jean, received an award for 61 years of volunteerism. She's as active and articulate today as she ever was, but she's much more gracious. There's none of this talky stuff at all. It's so revealing why they're so highly respected.

I look through my riding, and I know Peter Evans, who was head of the Clarington Older Adult Centre Board: a visionary, a writer, kind of an artistic type of fellow who unfortunately passed away—I'm not sure. But Angie Darlison is executive director of the Clarington Older Adult Centre Board.

They have day programs that you have to line up to subscribe for. It's so active, and they're seniors. In fact, I'm a member of the Clarington Older Adult Centre, and some say I should spend more time there. I believe you've got to stay active, and that's what they're doing for people. They're involved with travel, art, photography, literature—as you said, dance, tai chi—

*Interjection.*

1530

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Heaven forbid—world politics; and just general debates. They do have guest speakers, as you're suggesting. It's a great forum within the communities to have these retired, knowledgeable, experienced, life-learning people—artists, whoever they are—coming and lecturing to people and getting some sort of legitimization for it: a certificate.

I would love to have a Ph.D. in aging. That would mean you have to have eight years. I'd have to continue to be participating in something progressively, to demonstrate that I could get a doctorate in learning.

When I look around the House, and I say this respectfully, there are a number of members leaving this time. I know some of them and have known some of them for a long time, and I worry for them. If they don't have something to compel them to see life as full, encouraging and full of hope, then I think that it's another step towards aging. I would say wish them well. I won't mention their names. I'm sure there'll be appropriate tributes at the time.

One of them is Wayne Arthurs. He's a good friend of mine. I served with him on regional council. He was the

mayor of Pickering. He was a high school teacher, I believe; a great guy. We happen to think about some things differently. It turns out that I'm right, he's wrong, but it's not that simple. We, through learning, quite honestly, make a better contribution. In that respect, that applies to everybody in the House here.

This opportunity here for Eldercollege is something we should pass to celebrate the idea of lifelong learning and to make a contribution in our own communities; to sow the seeds so it continues to take place. It calls for looking at other jurisdictions that already do it, whether it's in Vancouver or other cities. In fact, in Nova Scotia it's quite popular, because they have an aging population. Maybe it's only focused on culture or folklore, but there are examples today where this is in practice—so we don't have to reinvent the wheel—and it makes use of resources that are in our communities today.

I want to put a few other names on the list here. I have Don Welsh, who is the board chair of the Clarington Older Adults Association; Vi Ashton: She was my best coach when I was a councillor. She'd call me and give me what for on most stuff. Jenny Yorgason, who used to work for one of the members here at one time, is the executive director of community care in Port Perry, and Sally Barrie is with community care. They are important. They have day programs for people who are aging. That's part of what we're talking about.

Some of the people involved on the boards are Moe Richards, Jane Moores and Muriel Moynes, all people I know. Al Strike, a retired lawyer—a brilliant guy. If there's ever been a project built or money raised, Al Strike's name was involved in it. These people are still making a contribution to our community.

I think that we should all look forward to serving our communities as long as we are capable. This is one more way of making sure we do stay involved, engaged and capable. At the end of it, you get a degree or certificate. Lord knows we each give out certificates every week to someone for something they've achieved. This is one more way of making everyone in the community feel valued.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I will be supporting Mr. Johnson's bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It is my honour to rise in support of the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's bill, and I speak, as well, for my colleague from Beaches-East York.

Certainly this is a worthy cause and something to be supported. It brings back a charming individual from my past, when I think about Eldercollege, because this was a lady who was Ukrainian and was part of my congregation. I've actually spoken about her before in this House, because she was one of those tireless volunteers that the member from Durham talks about.

She passed away quite a while ago, now; she was in her 90s when she did pass on. The first third of her life was spent in absolute terror. She was a survivor of the



Holodomor. The second third of her life was spent raising children, and it looked like the third third of her life was going to be spent looking after her husband, who had Alzheimer's. We all felt for her because she was one of those busy people who you asked to do something because they're the ones who'll get it done, despite all the other constraints on their time.

When he passed on, her life really started. The first thing she did was visit some of her children out in BC and went to Eldercollege. She also travelled. She just gained; the last 10 years of her life were, she said constantly, the best 10 years of her life because she used them to the fullest. She travelled. She took courses. I remember her coming and sharing about some of those courses with her United Church women's group, about how she learned about the opera. She'd even sing us a little aria or two in Ukrainian and English. It was wonderful. There's an example of somebody who really was served by Eldercollege, but she had to go to BC to get that service. So, of course, it would be wonderful to have it here. I understand Canterbury College and the University of Windsor are very interested in hosting this.

Obviously, some study needs to be done. Obviously, some committee time needs to be spent on something like this. The first thing that came to my mind, when I think 55-plus—I don't know anybody 55 to even 65 who is in any way retired or who has time for Eldercollege. This is perhaps the new reality. Of course, not to be partisan about it, but there's only about a third of us now that have a defined benefit pension plan, so there's not a lot of people who can afford to retire at 55. I remember, back in the day of my parents' generation, when churches would have armies of volunteers of 55-plus, many of them, of course, who were women who worked at home all their lives and then continued to work for the church when their children grew up, but also those who just genuinely retired from work and were available for volunteer work. That volunteer pool is largely drying up now for many service organizations. This is sad. We all know that now, as you do the Tim Hortons or Walmart shopping, you are as likely to see somebody post-55 or 65 even performing those functions of a young student because they need the money; because they can't afford to retire. Or, if they finally do retire, they have such health issues that they're incapable of doing something like Eldercollege.

I only hold that out because that just seems to be part of our new reality in Ontario, for whatever reason. I can safely say that among folk whom I know who are 55 to 65, which is the bulk of my friends, there ain't no one retiring any time soon, mostly for pecuniary reasons, but also because they like what they do and they're engaged in their work and they want to keep working.

So I would want to see—and I'm sure I'm not alone in this; I understand that Canterbury College would want to see this—some studies done to show how many people, what pool of people, might take part in this and who they are and where they are, and whether it's feasible from that standpoint as well. Certainly, there's no question, as

the member from Durham said—it's always engaging to listen to the member from Durham, by the way. He speaks a lot in this place, so we're engaged a lot with him. He's enthusiastic. Of course, learning is lifelong. Of course, it is. We all know that. In fact, I was speaking to my friend from Beaches-East York, who was, I just learned, to do a doctorate one day. Great, except that when you're working here 12 hours a day, when do you find the time?

However, we all want to—and having done my doctorate, I have to say that I'm distanced enough now that I'm really at the stage where I wouldn't mind going back and hearing a lecture, but I don't want to do the work. That's the thing. I really don't want to have to turn in essays or write exams any more. Again, Eldercollege is a perfect place for that. It's the perfect place to take up a course—something you're interested in. The onus is not on doing any kind of work. You're there for the fun. You're there for the learning. Of course, you're there, also—let's be frank, because that's something that we should mention about Eldercollege—for the socialization and for the networking, because it's fun, and many of our elderly, particularly our elderly women, if their spouses pass on, are very, very isolated. If they're healthy enough to be part of Eldercollege, they're often living alone. This gives them a chance to get out into the world and do something for them, purely for them. It's a wonderful program in that regard.

Another elderly volunteer that we had at the church, who really runs the church still—she's always there. I would hazard a guess that she's probably in her 80s now. I caught her going in to take tai chi. She has just taken up tai chi in her 80s. I thought that was amazing. That's brilliant. Finally, I said to her: "Joan, you're doing something for yourself, how wonderful." Because she always, all her life—and very typical of many women of that age—doing things for other people. This gives them a chance to focus on themselves for a change, and again, I don't have the stats to back this up, but I would imagine that most of the students enrolling in Eldercollege are women, which is also an interesting aspect of it.

#### 1540

I'm going to leave some moments for my colleague, but yes, absolutely, I totally support the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on this. Maybe it's just that I'm a big-city kid, and maybe there are more people who would take advantage of it in smaller communities—who knows?—but I would like to hear from him, perhaps in the time he's got left, if there has been any study done on the pool of possible students for Eldercollege in Ontario; where they're located, would Canterbury College be the place to go? Of course, then there's the overwhelming and overarching question of, will this government fund some of it? Because as much as we would want to see Trillium or anyone else contribute to the program, at the core of it, it would need some money from government.

So those two questions: (1) has he had discussions—again, he's part of the government—with his own cabinet



ministers about this, and are there funds possibly available; and (2) are the students really out there who would take advantage of this, particularly around Canterbury College and the University of Windsor, since they have indicated some interest in the program? Why not start there, where there is some interest?

I like to think that there would be an Eldercollege at the University of Toronto so that we in the Legislature could, on our lunch hours, go over to a lecture. Perhaps after work, instead of imbibing wine and goodies with lobbyists, we could actually learn another language or something across the park there. I'm interested in hearing from the member on that. Suffice it to say, we're supporting it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm more than pleased to rise in support of my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's bill, and I'm going to share my time with the member from Essex.

This particular bill takes me back to the days of when we used to have adult and continuing education—I remember those days—where, if you look at the history, the first ESL programs and the first literacy programs were run by the school boards to engage people in learning so that they could continue on with their education. In some cases, they also took upholstery classes, or maybe they took bridge classes or dancing or computers or small engine. I can remember myself over the years as a young mother having the opportunity to go to my local school and take a number of courses over eight to 10 weeks, usually on a Tuesday or a Thursday evening. It gave me a chance to learn something new, get engaged with some new folks and, of course, the socialization. But, more importantly, it made me use my grey cells. I think this is something that the member has identified: If you don't use it, you tend to lose it.

It's interesting, if you look at the statistics, especially now in an aging population, how important, in terms of health promotion and prevention, the whole issue of continuing education or adult learning really is. To play a game of bridge is not an easy thing to do; you have to use your brain because math is involved—yes, there's some good luck in cards. But there's also the opportunity to have another language.

There has been extensive research done that speaks to Alzheimer's and dementia—that helps to delay the onset. There are two courses you can take: One is dancing and the other, believe it or not, is painting. These are two activities that stimulate the brain synapses in such a way as to help with the delay. One, obviously, is dancing, which is called patterning; and the other is using your hands, which is another way of patterning as well, with your brain.

We know the research is there where we can make a difference in lives in terms of prevention and having the opportunity to delay the onset, but at the same time, we also know that in an aging population, isolation is a very serious issue, and lack of transportation to get to many

places you might like to go becomes a serious impediment to that learning. So when my colleagues spoke about the issue of rural and other opportunities, for example, libraries, community centres—in my case, I have seniors' centres—this is exactly what we need to be able to do to encourage more people to engage in lifelong learning or education.

We also know that the health reports say—again, it's the research—that if a person is engaged socially, if they're not isolated, if they in fact get up and get out, they are healthier.

They tend to not only engage their brains, they tend to eat together, they tend to socialize in a multitude of ways. That is health promotion; that is another way to keep people from being in isolation and from being lonely, because loneliness tends to add a great deal of stress, and then you get into mental health issues as you're older.

I'm not sure that I'm particularly enamoured of the “elder care” name since I fit into that category, so maybe we have to find another name for it, I say to my colleague. Again, I think it goes back to the member from High Park. The world has changed, and when we tend to think of elders, we have to define them: What are they? Who are they? Today, I think an elder is quite different from an elder of 50 years ago. Today you have people who—certainly in my case, in my community, a lot of them are engaged in computers. It's a whole new world, being able to access computers, and they would like to and would enjoy more computer learning. But again, I don't think they consider themselves old. That's certainly something that we would have to consider.

I also wanted to have a chance to speak about the opportunity to reach out, in terms of the courses, in a variety of other ways. As I said, I'm a strong proponent of adult and continuing education. We seem to do a fairly good job when it comes to engaging young people back into our school system who, for one reason or another, haven't fit into the system and have dropped out. But we have to encourage people to continue to upgrade their skills in a whole host of ways so that there's new technology, new opportunities and maybe a new career. Again, as has been indicated, we are not the same folks we were many years ago. Our opportunities are multi-fold in that we can do so many things. We're going to have so many different kinds of jobs, we're going to have so many different kinds of opportunities. Again, to engage, to explore and to have success is something that should be available to everyone in our society, not simply to a particular age group.

I'm very encouraged by the opportunity that's being presented here in this bill and I sincerely hope that it doesn't become a struggle between colleges and universities in education, in terms of how we can make this happen. If, in fact, we believe that this should happen—and I do, and I think everyone in this House does—then the question should be, what's the art of the possible and how do we make it happen? Because it's in the best interests of society as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. To my colleague, thank you.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My friend was very kind to leave me a few minutes and, really, that's all I need to speak to this.

The reality is that the member has come up with a very good idea. Like so many good ideas on Thursday afternoon, I await something to happen with it or to it finally, but it's an idea that needs to be studied, and as an idea for the long term, it's probably a very good thing to happen in this province and in this country as we continue to grey. That is what is said of the baby boom generation, of which I am a very proud member. There need to be opportunities for all of us to keep ourselves fit and mindful of the world, events, new opportunities and things to learn.

I'm also aware that in a place like the city of Toronto there are many opportunities for people to take—after-work courses and summer courses. The Toronto school board offers a great many opportunities, as do community colleges. But they are not specifically geared to those people over 55 or 60 years of age; they're geared to a very broad audience.

Unfortunately, it's been my experience, and in discussions with the school board, that there never seems to have been enough money to operate the courses that they need. They have people who are willing to train, they have people who are willing to learn, but there never seems to be enough opportunity for money for them to carry out what they know they can do. They have spoken to me many times, school trustees, saying, "We get a per capita formula for young people, we get one for students of high school age, but if somebody's older than that, if somebody who never had a chance to go to high school, if somebody who came from another country who never had a chance to study these specific items and wants to gain some Canadian experience or some Canadian educational experience, the money that's available for them is simply not there." Therefore, they cannot offer, say, a course on a Shakespearean play that one might take in high school, that somebody maybe from—I'll pick a place—Afghanistan had never had an opportunity to read or to study. If they wanted to read or study that so that they could immerse themselves in our culture, then they don't have that opportunity.

1550

The reason I'm bringing that up is because if this idea is to come to fruition, and it should, then we have to look at how it is going to be paid for. We have to look at whether we are expecting these Eldercollege students to pay for it themselves, in which case, yes, some will take the course, but too many will not. Do we expect funding to come from private resources? Then we had better pull out those private resources and get them ready. Or do we expect government to shoulder some of the burden? I'm not sure what is planned here or even what is possible, because this is early stages, but I would suggest that any idea worth doing is worth doing well. In the end, there is probably going to have to be some money attached to this

if it is to be everything it can be and the success that this member, I know, wants it to be.

To the University of Windsor Canterbury College, which put this forward, I'm looking forward to taking a course there, in my retirement perhaps, one day, too.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I'm pleased as well to stand today in support of my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and his resolution on Eldercollege. Like my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, I, too, talk to seniors, for two reasons: One, I am one; the second is that all my friends are ones, too. So I can appreciate what this might mean for myself, my friends and others.

I want to say at the outset, too, that Dr. Lloyd Brown-John, from the University of Windsor, who is the driving force behind this effort at Canterbury College, is a friend, someone who I have known over the years. He's a great expert in wine and scotch, so I can think already of two courses that he might facilitate that I might be interested in.

But it goes far beyond that, of course. When my colleague from Etobicoke mentioned the name "Eldercollege," I kind of think that has a certain amount of respect to it, you know? You respect your elders and that sort of thing.

But it is a concept that may be new to some of us. It is non-credit courses that are provided, as has been said, for persons over the age of 55, in locations and at a cost that would encourage a number of people to participate.

I want to point out, too, that the keys to Eldercollege are fourfold, as Lloyd Brown-John points out:

(1) An authentic relationship with an institution of post-secondary education—that's available in Windsor, where this idea is being proposed, but certainly also, as my colleague from Parkdale-High Park said, here in the city of Toronto or, of course, anywhere where there's a college or a university, but I think it could even be, by extension, Internet courses that could be conducted by the Eldercollege;

(2) A diverse array of courses—not taught but facilitated—open to any person over the age of 55, and I think that's an important distinction, that it is not a course that's taught where you have to have intermediate testing, and as has been pointed out, you don't have assignments or exams, but you are able to learn from the facilitator;

(3) Courses held in locations convenient to senior citizens, taking into account limited mobility; and

(4) Partnerships with private sector sponsors and participants ranging from management of senior residences to restaurants and community service facilities.

So I think there are lots of options that we can look at to facilitate these courses, and I'm sure that the subject matter is simply unlimited; that it goes beyond the first two that I mentioned that Dr. Brown-John is very expert in. It's kind of one of these things where you think of it and we can do it. And if the person who thinks about a particular course isn't in a position to facilitate it, they



very well might know someone who does, or if the idea is put out there and they reach out, that there would be somebody with some expertise in the area of interest that would facilitate that.

One of the reasons that I'm very interested in the initiative that's coming from Canterbury College, of course, is that it's in my area. Canterbury College is in Windsor, but certainly would serve the areas of Essex county. In fact, Dr. Brown-John has suggested a number of places in the county that the courses could be presented in. He's thinking of five campuses: in the south part of Essex county, in Leamington, Kingsville, Wheatley, Essex, Harrow and Cottam; in the north part, there's Tecumseh, Lakeshore, Tilbury and Comber; on the west side, there's Amherstburg, LaSalle and Malden; in the central west, of course, is Windsor; and central east is Windsor, as well as even into the Chatham-Kent area.

One other area that I suggested that I can think of is that these courses now, with Skype that we have on the Internet, could be virtually taught over the Internet.

So I agree—in fact, I'll emphasize what's been said by all—that education should be a continuing thing, age should not be the deciding factor and that the opportunity to continue to learn—and it's been suggested that some might be retiring from this place; I'm one of them. I think this is one of the great things that I will be able to look forward to, to continue to keep my mind active and do some things that I haven't been able to do over the last 17 years, and perhaps extend my field of vision.

I'm looking forward to this. I hope we adopt this resolution. I think it's going to be used all across this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honorable member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I greatly appreciate the comments that were made this afternoon by the members from Durham, Parkdale-High Park, Etobicoke Centre, Beaches-East York and Essex. You raised a number of good questions.

The member from Durham spoke about volunteerism and how important it is. Of course, the way this program is being talked about by Dr. Lloyd Brown-John is very dependent upon volunteerism, so that'll be key.

The member from Parkdale-High Park talked about age 55. I know I'm personally working on the freedom 75 piece now for myself.

Location of programs is going to be crucial, and where this can be so successful in rural Ontario is, as the member from Essex says, spreading it out into areas all over an area and offering courses; taking the courses to the people who are interested in taking them.

The member from Beaches-East York talked about funding. I think having support for this resolution gives me a little bit more ammunition to go to the ministry and talk about what kind of supports can be offered. I've had conversations with the senior secretariat about this, and I believe that there's support there to see this happen.

The member from Etobicoke Centre hit on one of the key things, and that was the socialization aspect of what

this could bring, of getting people out and involved and trying to combat some of that isolation that takes place.

To the member from Essex: I just want to thank you for staying on a Thursday afternoon. Normally you'd be on the highway somewhere between here and Windsor, and I greatly appreciate you staying to speak so kindly about this resolution.

The member from Etobicoke said, "So how do we make this happen?" I think that's the key thing. We have an opportunity to tap into the expertise that exists in our communities.

I thank you all for your comments today and I look forward to really becoming a champion for this program and making it happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired. It's time to vote.

#### IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll first deal with ballot item number 10, standing in the name of Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Dickson has moved second reading of Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Dickson?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to please refer this bill to the committee on justice policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the committee on justice policy? So ordered.

#### RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 11.

Mr. Moridi has moved second reading of Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Moridi?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to request that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed that the bill go to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? So ordered.

#### ADULT EDUCATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 12.

Mr. Johnson has moved private members' notice of motion number 75.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Orders of the day? The minister without portfolio.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1602.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

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Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark  
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones  
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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David Caplan, Kim Craiton  
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Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	5930
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5930

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Awareness Day</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5930
<b>Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Awareness Day</b>	
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5931
<b>Cystic fibrosis</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5931
<b>Employment practices</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5931
<b>Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Scarborough</b>	
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	5932
<b>Sledge hockey</b>	
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5932
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5932
<b>Employment insurance</b>	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	5932
<b>Energy policies</b>	
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5932
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier).....	5933

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act (Animal Protection Complaints Commissioner), 2011, Bill 194, Mr. Berardinetti / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario (commissaire aux plaintes relatives à la protection des animaux), projet de loi 194, M. Berardinetti</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	5933
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5933

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5933

<b>Dog ownership</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5933
<b>Highway safety</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5934
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5934
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	5934
<b>Solar energy projects</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5934
<b>Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5935

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 189, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu, projet de loi 189, M. Dickson</b>	
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5935
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5937
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5939
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	5940
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5941
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5941
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5942
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5942
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5942
<b>Royal assent / Sanction royale</b>	
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson) .....	5942
<b>Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, Bill 182, Mr. Moridi / Loi de 2011 sur la sensibilisation au radon et la protection contre l'infiltration de ce gaz, projet de loi 182, M. Moridi</b>	
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	5943
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5944
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5945
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5947
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5947
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5948
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	5949
<b>Adult Education</b>	
Mr. Rick Johnson .....	5949
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5952
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5953
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	5955
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5956
Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	5956
Mr. Rick Johnson .....	5957



<b>Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 189, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu, projet de loi 189, M. Dickson</b>	
Second reading agreed to.....	5957
<b>Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, Bill 182, Mr. Moridi / Loi de 2011 sur la sensibilisation au radon et la protection contre l'infiltration de ce gaz, projet de loi 182, M. Moridi</b>	
Second reading agreed to.....	5957
<b>Adult education</b>	
Motion agreed to.....	5958

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 12 May 2011 / Jeudi 12 mai 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 188, Mr. Chan / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien, projet de loi 188, M. Chan</b>	
Hon. Michael Chan .....	5913
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5914
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5914
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5916
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5918
Second reading agreed to .....	5919

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Mike Colle .....	5919
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5919
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5919
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5919
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5919
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5919
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5919
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5919
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5919
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5920
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5920
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5920

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Energy policies

Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5920
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5920
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5920
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5921

#### Energy policies

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5921
Hon. Mr. Duguid .....	5921

#### Gasoline prices

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5922
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5922

#### Coroner's inquest

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5923
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	5923

#### Energy policies

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5923
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5924

#### Employment practices

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5924
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5924

#### Nurses

Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5925
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5925

#### Gasoline prices

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5925
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5925

#### Patient safety

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5926
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5926

#### Anti-bullying initiatives

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	5926
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5926
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5927

#### Organ donation

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5927
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5927

#### Special-needs students

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5927
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5928

#### Multiculturalism

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5928
Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	5928

#### Highway construction

Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	5929
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5929

#### Éducation en français / French-language education

M. Michael Prue .....	5929
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5929

#### Taxation

Mr. Rick Johnson .....	5930
Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5930

#### Visitors

Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5930
Mr. Kuldip Kular .....	5930

#### Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5930
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*Continued on inside back cover*





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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 16 May 2011**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Lundi 16 mai 2011**



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 May 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 mai 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Islamic prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce—and thank you for accommodating him in the Speaker's gallery this morning—a good friend of mine, the executive director and president of the Canadian Urban Institute and my former mayor, His Worship Fred Eisenberger. Welcome, Fred.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's my pleasure to introduce Wanda Secord, Lisa Sarsfield and Wendy Hayes, who are from the Durham Children's Aid Society, visiting us here today at Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** It is my pleasure to welcome the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, who are in attendance today, and a special note to Peter Gould, Bill Emmott and all the members of the board. Welcome, and thank you for all of your hard work.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I too would like to welcome the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, but more importantly—well, not more importantly, but just as importantly—I'd like to recognize two of my constituents, Doug and Gail Puddicombe. They are here today to visit the firefighters' memorial, where a relative of Gail's is recognized for his sacrifice. I want to thank them for coming to Queen's Park while they were here for such an important visit to Toronto.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I would like to welcome to the House two of my constituents who are here for Dairy Farmers of Ontario Day: Dave Murray and Jim Fitzgerald.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** It's my pleasure to introduce Carina Hochgeschurz and her mom, Colleen. Carina was a page with us in the last session of the Parliament. She enjoyed it so much she's returning to see me again.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm delighted that we are joined today by people from the Hastings county children's aid society. We have youth, staff and members of the board joining us today.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I would like to introduce two visitors from Family and Children's Services of Leeds and Grenville: executive director Allan Hogan and board member Tony Barnes.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I too want to welcome people from Sudbury, from the children's aid society: Colette Prévost, the executive director, and Dan Coté, the chair of the board. Welcome to Toronto and enjoy question period.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to welcome to the House today members of the Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County: Daniel Ryan and Arijana Tomicic and youth David.

I would also like to welcome to the House this morning, joining us in the gallery, the Ontario PC summer interns.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would like to introduce to the House this morning my good friend Gisèle Hébert, who's the executive director of the North Bay Parry Sound children's aid society. She's here with Rick Sapinski, who's our board chair.

Also today in the members' gallery I have visiting Claudette Guthrie, who is the mom of my staffer Adrienne Guthrie, who's here with us today as well.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, as you've probably figured out, today is children's aid society lobby day. I am pleased to introduce Paul Zarnke of the Peel Children's Aid Society and Trish Keachie of Dufferin Child and Family Services.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I've been asked on behalf of my colleague from Guelph to welcome Kyla Fishburn's father, David Fishburn, and some of her family—Robin Fishburn and Jean Fishburn—Kyla, of course, is one of your pages; and from Willowdale, Frank Blum and Anne Shelton; and from London, Joanne Maddeford, to the Legislature to watch the proceedings.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm glad to welcome to the House today representatives of Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County, as well as acknowledge the presence of members of the Halton Children's Aid Society. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, I wonder if you could help me welcome members of the Kingston and Frontenac children's aid society, including board president Brian Devlin, executive director Raymond Muldoon, and Yvonne Cooper, who's the communications coordinator.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to the House today on their lobby day members from the Lanark children's aid society: Suzanne Geoffrion and Melissa Hillier.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I would like to welcome the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, along with all of the children's aid societies who are here today and many youth who have joined us from around the

province at Queen's Park today, including Mary Ballantyne, the executive director, and Donna Denny, the past president. Many of them will be meeting with MPPs here today, and I know that our members are very much looking forward to those meetings. Welcome.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I am pleased to welcome, from family youth and child services of Muskoka, whom I just had a very productive meeting with, executive director Marty Rutledge, Jennifer Scott, Anthony Weiler and Christopher Finlay here to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I would like my colleagues to join me in welcoming folks from the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society, they being Bill Bevan, executive director; Shane Renaud, board president; Norman King, the past president; Jamie Henderson—a good friend of my friend Gerry Phillips—a member of the board; Linda Goodhew, director of children's resources; and Jemima Manayah. Welcome.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today John Phair, a councillor from the township of Enniskillen and also a reporter with Ontario Farmer, who will be joining us shortly.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** It's a pleasure to introduce and welcome visitors from the far east: Raymond Lemay, CEO; and Jean Dugas, chair of the board of Valoris Service for children and adults of Prescott-Russell, and also Jean-Louis Diamond of the Hawkesbury employment office. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to welcome to the House today members of the York region children's aid society: President Tammy Ward; immediate past president, the Rev. M.J. Perry; committee member Maddie Di Muccio; executive director Patrick Lake, and communications director Jennifer Grant. Welcome.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais présenter à l'Assemblée la directrice générale de la société d'aide à l'enfance, M<sup>me</sup> Colette Prévost, ainsi que le président du conseil, M. Daniel Côté.

It's my pleasure to introduce to the House the president and executive director of the Sudbury children's aid society, Daniel Côté and Colette Prévost.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to welcome, from Kitchener-Waterloo family and children's services, the president, Mr. Royston Simon, and Karen.

1040

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It gives me great pleasure this morning to introduce the executive director and members of the board of the Ottawa children's aid society. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the ambassador of the state of Kuwait to Canada, His Excellency Ali Al-Sammak. Please join me in welcoming our guest to the Legislature today. Your Excellency, welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to welcome, from Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin, executive director Rod Potgieter; board members Jennifer Paul-O'Donnell, Cheryl Fish and Don Lawrence; and youth in transition workers Tabitha MacArthur and

Kelsie Hitchen. They are joined by three youths: Helen, Matthew and Hailey. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Also seated in the Speaker's gallery this morning is a group of individuals whom I'd like to introduce: John Hergott; Bruce MacKay; Patrick Croley; Phil Reid; Anne Reid; Erica Beck; Judy Anderson; Neil Anderson; Bill Davidson; Father Yves Fournier; my nephew Nicholas Peters; and the one and only Joe Peters, my brother. Maybe at some point down the road, he may move back to Elgin county. Who knows?

As well, on behalf of the member from Kenora—Rainy River and page Jonathan Hampton, I welcome to the Speaker's gallery today Jonathan's grandparents, Elie and Gay Martel—Elie as well being a former member of this chamber. Welcome back to Queen's Park today. It's my understanding as well that Jonathan's mother, Shelley, another former member, will be joining us through the day today at the Legislature. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

On behalf of page Christian Gill and the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, we'd like to welcome mother, Anne Gill, and father, Ken Gill, to the Legislature today.

I also take this opportunity to wish my executive assistant, Maggie Head, a happy birthday today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Minister of Energy: There are two things guaranteed under a McGuinty Liberal government—hydro bills will skyrocket and you'll increase taxes. I want to give Ontario families relief from skyrocketing hydro bills, which is why an Ontario PC government will end the Premier's sweetheart deal with Samsung that is driving up bills across this province.

Minister, last week you said that there was a substantial penalty if the deal were ended. In fact, you said that you personally would make that clear and give numbers to the public by the end of the day Tuesday. You did not deliver. Your infrastructure minister then came out the next day and admitted that you had no numbers.

Why don't you come clean? Exactly what kind of penalty clause do you claim that you put in your sweetheart deal with Samsung?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Last week, the Leader of the Opposition made what I think is very obviously a rookie mistake when he announced his reckless energy policy. His energy policy will destroy our efforts to build a globe-leading clean energy economy and it will kill thousands of clean energy jobs.

Ontario families are now getting a glimpse of what that leader is all about, and they don't like it. Even his own caucus members are lining up against him. First, we had the member for Oxford backpedalling within hours



of his leader's announcement last week. This weekend, we learned of another caucus member at odds with his own leader's reckless energy policy—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Withdraw.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member for Newmarket–Aurora now sits on a board of a clean energy company that his leader's energy policy wants to hammer. Maybe the Leader of the Opposition can explain that one to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the minister: The Ontario PC team caucus and candidates believe—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Ministers will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Ontario PC caucus candidates are united in opposing your sweetheart deal that is driving up hydro bills and causing them to skyrocket across the province. Minister, you know this: Skyrocketing hydro bills hurt families and they kill jobs, and your sweetheart Samsung deal is going to drive rates even higher.

You keep defending it, and you say that you want to keep the details of this sweetheart deal a secret from the general public. In January 2010, you simply had a fancy photo op for a framework agreement to begin four years of contract talks for power down the road.

There is time to cut our losses and the sweetheart deal. Minister, back up your claims. Make what you claim is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think it's pretty obvious that the Leader of the Opposition's launch of his energy plan last week has not gone well. Families reject his plan to tear down all we've built and to kiss away billions of dollars of investment in thousands of clean energy jobs.

Ontario families want clean energy and the jobs that we're creating, so I find it just a little ironic that the Leader of the Opposition has a plan to destroy our clean energy economy while a member of his own caucus is sitting on the board of directors of a company that's trying to participate in the clean energy economy that his plan is going to absolutely hammer.

Does the leader not see the fact as well that the member for Oxford jumped offside within hours of his plan coming up, because the member for Oxford is concerned for the 900 jobs that his leader wants to kill? It's very obvious that the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, you actually signed this sweetheart framework deal with Samsung. It's your signature on that bill. But you failed to back up your claim of a substantial monetary penalty. This tells us that there is no such thing. If it were true, the minister would make

it open to the public so that they could see the details of the sweetheart deal that you signed.

I don't know what world you live in, but families are tired of your skyrocketing hydro bills. They want to see change, they want to see relief and they want to see an Ontario PC government that will give families relief on their taxes and skyrocketing hydro bills.

Minister, I'll ask you this time: Will you please make this so-called substantial monetary penalty public today? You said you would last Tuesday; we don't think you actually have it. Won't you come clean?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** What this province needs is leadership that wants to build this province up, not tear this province down; build up our clean energy economy, not tear it apart; create thousands of clean energy jobs, not kill those jobs—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The member from Halton. The member from Lanark. The Minister of Infrastructure. We have a lot of guests who are joining us here in the chamber, and I'm sure they all want to hear the questions and the answers.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We have such leadership in the Premier we have in this province today. And where's the Premier today? He's in Windsor. He's visiting CS Wind, where 700 direct and indirect jobs are being created—jobs that our policies support and your policies want to kill. Later on, he'll be visiting Canadian Solar in Guelph; 500 jobs are being created there, 500 jobs in Guelph that you want to take away from the good people of Guelph. Our Premier is there because he's the leader—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Energy: Quite frankly, nobody believes the McGuinty Liberals' phoney job claims anymore. You claimed here in the House 800 jobs in Sarnia, Ontario; it turns out there are only—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of the Environment, Minister of Agriculture, government House leader, please come to order.

Please continue.

1050

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You claimed that there were 800 jobs created in Sarnia. It turns out that there are only eight, including a security guy and somebody who mows the lawn.

Nobody believes your claims anymore. In fact, what you don't understand is that skyrocketing hydro bills hurt Ontario families and they kill jobs; 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the McGuinty government from higher taxes and higher hydro rates. That's why Ontario families want to see change to get relief on hydro bills.

I'll ask you one more time, Minister. You're bound and determined to drive up hydro bills even more. Why won't you release the terms of this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This Leader of the Opposition refuses to take my word for the fact that 13,000 jobs, indeed, were created as a result of our Green Energy Act last year, so maybe he'll take the word of workers directly.

Misty Oakley is a Siliken employee with three young children. Miss Oakley was on social assistance before securing a job at the solar manufacturing plant. She said that employment with Siliken means security and a good future for her and her family. Why does the Leader of the Opposition want to take her good future away? Why does the Leader of the Opposition want to take her job away? Why does he want to insult her by suggesting that she doesn't even exist?

Come on out into the rest of Ontario. Join us in meeting the thousands of clean energy workers who are benefiting from our clean energy economy. Get out of your bubble here at Queen's Park. Get out there—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Talk about somebody living in a bubble, Mr. Speaker. These guys are so out of touch, they don't know that hydro rates hurt families and kill jobs when they skyrocket under the McGuinty Liberal government.

Let's cut through the chaff, let's cut through all of your bluster, Minister, and just come clean. We want you to release the terms of the framework agreement that you yourself signed with Samsung—the same deal that's going to drive up hydro rates even more for struggling seniors, families and small businesses. You claim that there's a substantial monetary penalty in this agreement that you signed. If that's the case, put it on the floor of the Legislature and let Ontario families decide whether this deal is worth higher and higher hydro rates.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Our efforts to build a clean energy economy have put thousands of people across this province back to work, but the Leader of the Opposition stands opposed to this recovery. He stands opposed to the thousands of Ontarians who were previously unemployed but now have found work in our clean energy economy.

I want you to hear a quote from Ian Karleff from AS Solar. This is what he had to say: "The FIT and microFIT programs have been fantastic creators of jobs. AS Solar has created 14 brand new jobs. We were able to find highly skilled employees with lengthy logistics background all laid off in the past few years from the automotive sector."

We're putting Ontarians back to work. The last thing they need is a Leader of the Opposition who wants to put them back on the unemployment line, and that's what his clean energy plan would do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister in his bubble simply does not understand that skyrocketing hydro bills hurt hard-working families. They've killed jobs in our province. We've lost some 300,000 manufacturing jobs under the McGuinty Liberals with higher taxes and skyrocketing hydro bills. I don't even know if this minister has even read the deal that he signed. I have no idea if this minister has signed the framework agreement. He boasted last week that there was a substantial monetary penalty. He said that he would make it public. He has failed to do so.

Minister, did you even read the deal that you signed? How much exactly are you going to drive up hydro bills to fulfill this sweetheart deal with a foreign multinational corporation? Won't you please come clean and put the terms before the assembly? What are you trying to hide?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Last week, the Leader of the Opposition made a huge mistake by introducing a reckless energy policy that's going to put thousands of people out of work. If he doesn't take my word for it, take the word of the hundreds of people who are now writing in to us with concerns about where he wants to take this province.

Let me quote Jim Cummings from Clearly Solar: "Your government showed tremendous leadership with the introduction of the Green Energy Act and the FIT programs. My company is living proof that this initiative is creating jobs. In one short year, we've hired over 15 people."

He went on to say, "Mr. Hudak announced that if elected, he would kill the entire FIT program and all the jobs that go with it. This is the kind of simplistic nonsense that could kill our industry."

We, on this side of the House, agree with Jim Cummings.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. On Friday, the Information and Privacy Commissioner launched an investigation into the handling of freedom-of-information requests by the Minister of Finance. Will this government be reviewing their practices, or do they still plan to pretend that everything is fine?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me say, first of all, that we are very happy to work with the office of the privacy commissioner. We're very confident that all the processes that needed to be followed were followed.

I know that this House has heard the Premier and the Minister of Finance talk about the compliance rate that is in place under our government: 86% for 2010. That is a compliance rate, in terms of responding to these requests, that stands in stark contrast to previous governments—PCs at 57% and NDP at 50%. An 86% compliance rate—which indicates we want people to have information.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people who make this province work every day are the people whom we all



work for. The government and government documents aren't the private property of the Liberal Party.

Last week, we learned that political staff were trying to block the release of audits and block information about the government's unfair tax scheme. Why won't the government admit that they have a secrecy habit, one that they need to quit right away?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Because that's just not true. It's just not true that we don't want people to have information. The member has omitted to mention that for that request, all of that information was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, where it rightly needed to be. That's what I mean when I say that all of the processes that needed to be followed were followed. We are very committed to accountability.

I think the member opposite knows that we are interested in making sure that people have the information that they need. But the member opposite also knows that there are procedures. We follow the procedures, and we will work with the privacy commissioner as she does her review.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think the minister knows that the Minister of Finance's political staff actually tried to get documents blocked from being released. Those are the facts.

Today in Windsor, the Premier will tout the benefits of a contract that he signed on behalf of the people of Ontario that he refuses to make public, just like we're not allowed to know how much families are on the hook for to TransCanada for the cancelled gas plant in Oakville.

Why does this government believe that they can make multi-billion-dollar commitments without showing Ontario families the fine print?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We don't believe that. We believe that information that is generated by the government needs to be available to people, which is why we have complied 86% of the time in the time frame that its needed—much better than previous governments. We're very committed to accountability. In fact, we've tightened rules around accountability. Ministries are very clear that they have a responsibility to follow the rules, to disclose information.

In the case that the member is talking about, the information was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, which is where it should have been in the first place.

The member opposite knows that we are following the rules. We will work with the privacy commissioner to make sure that people who ask for information from the government get it in a timely manner.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier. In 1998, a member of this Legislature declared, "We're buying a pig in a poke.... The public has a billion and a half of their tax dollars into this thing, but they're going to have no right to look at the document

that outlines the deal...." That was the chair of cabinet speaking about the 407 contract.

Will the Acting Premier explain why that contract was made public but this one isn't?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I will say is, as I have said, we are very committed to making sure that people have the information that they need. What we're not going to do is, we're not going to compromise commercial dealings at the moment when they are the most sensitive. But as information can be revealed, we will make sure that people have the information that they need, which is what we have done. That is our record. We will continue to provide information as people request it.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier has insisted that this deal will lead to jobs and investment, but people can't see if there is any guarantee of jobs because that part of the contract is secret—just like the Premier insists that cancelling the private plant in Oakville won't cost a thing, while hiding the contract details that could prove him wrong.

Can the government show the people of Ontario the job guarantees in black and white, or are they asking us to buy a pig in a poke?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What we can show the people of Ontario is the jobs that are being created all over the province: the jobs in Windsor, the jobs in Tillsonburg, the jobs in Don Mills, the jobs in Burlington, Fort Erie, Guelph, Woodbridge, London, Oakville and Hamilton. This economy in Ontario is turning a corner, and it's turning a corner in large part because of the partnerships that we have put in place with the private sector, the investments that we have made in green energy, and the framework that we've put in place that is encouraging industry to come to Ontario. That is what we will show the people of Ontario. We are very pleased that that process is in place, because that's what people need in the province, in Hamilton and in Niagara. People need jobs. That's what we're producing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the people of Ontario have heard promises before. In 2002, the Premier promised to roll back rates on the 407. We're paying more than ever.

People deserve the facts. When will this government start making these contracts public so that families know the facts and not just promises from a government that has let them down far too many times?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** When we came to office, we challenged the contract that the previous government had put in place on the 407. We were not able to overturn that contract, but we are extending the 407 and the province is going to own and operate the 407. Had that previous government not put that contract in place, we would have been able to build the 407 extension by now.

The member opposite knows full well that we are coming out of an economic downturn. We are working



very hard in this province to create jobs, and the fact is, those jobs exist. Those jobs exist across the province: 700 jobs in Windsor, 300 jobs in Don Mills, 60 jobs in Welland, 150 jobs in Burlington and 225 jobs in Fort Erie. We will continue to put the framework in place to encourage industry to come here, because that's what the people of Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** To the Minister of Energy: The Ontario PC leader believes that renewable energy must be part of Ontario's power supply mix. Premier McGuinty only believes that it must be part of the supply mix if it is expensive. He has already driven away 300,000 manufacturing jobs by driving up hydro rates, which are now up 150% for everyone on time-of-use pricing. Now he tells Ontario families that they will have to pay 46% more on hydro bills, which he will spend on his expensive energy experiments.

Minister, where is the cabinet on this, and why can't you get him to understand that he's still on the same path that leads to his legacy of 300,000 killed jobs in manufacturing in this province?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I know the member opposite doesn't want to admit it, because it'll kill his story, but the fact is, the Ontario Energy Board reported last month that, indeed, rates are flat year over year as a result of our clean energy benefit—something that that party fails to support. If we were to go in the direction of his leader, that means an instant 10% increase on bills, because that's part of their plan.

I think it's not often that the Leader of the Opposition says something that makes sense, but I want to quote him on this. This is something he said not too long ago: "Too often, politicians cannot resist the temptation to interfere. Regrettably, that was also true under the Eves government when we pulled a 180-degree turn. This constant change of direction in government policy means investors no longer find Ontario a safe and stable environment in which to invest...."

It's too bad that he doesn't take his own advice when it comes to our clean energy policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd love him to ask seniors across this province if they think their hydro bills have flatlined.

There were renewable projects in Ontario before your green energy experiments, and there will be under an Ontario PC government. But an Ontario PC—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** My apologies. Stop the clock. I remind honourable ministers, particularly the ministers this is directed to, of the motto of this place, which is to hear the other side. The honourable member is asking a question directed at one of your min-

isters, and I hope you would be respectful so that your minister could hear the question.

Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** An Ontario PC government will put Ontario families first. We will pursue renewable energy projects and power at prices that families can afford.

Premier McGuinty used to say, "There is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment." Then he increased hydro rates by 150%, if you're on time-of-use, and killed 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Now he's telling Ontario families to get ready for him to increase their hydro bills by another 46%.

Why is a change in government the only way to stop a serial job killer in his tracks?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Leader of the Opposition's plan to destroy Ontario's clean energy economy takes us back to the days of burning dirty coal. It will not only take jobs away from this province; it will impact the health of Ontarians. And this is what the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The same lecture I just delivered to the government side holds true for the opposition side as well.

Please continue.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the members opposite should listen to what the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment had to say about their plan: "The Conservatives' proposal to kill" clean "energy will be a disaster for human health and the environment. It will be returning to coal—the world's most climate-destructive fuel—and the thousands of illnesses and hundreds of deaths that coal causes in Ontario each year. 'Doctors are appalled that Mr. Hudak would embrace such an irresponsible plan.'"

We stand with people who want to build a stronger province and create jobs and a healthier future for our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Information skills are crucial to the success of our students in the 21st century. Students need school libraries staffed with trained teacher-librarians to develop these skills. But in Ontario, according to the report from People for Education, fewer students than ever have access to teacher-librarians and school libraries are closing left, right and centre.

Why is the McGuinty government allowing the gradual yet dramatic death of school libraries in Ontario?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm very happy to have this opportunity to clarify for all the members of this assembly that there was only one government that actually cut funding for libraries and library resources, and that was the previous government.



Our government, on the other hand, has increased funding in education overall by 46%, but certainly directly to libraries as well, because we see them as very important resources. I think that if you read the report carefully, you will appreciate that the number of school librarians has actually increased under the term of this government. We will continue to work with boards.

I, for one, have had the opportunity to visit many schools where one of the first features in the school that they want to take me to is their library, because it is such a wonderful and valuable resource that supports student learning and student success in our schools.

So I say, especially to those locally elected boards that might be considering pulling back—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We are witnessing the dramatic death of school libraries in Ontario, and she says everything is great. I just don't get it.

She also knows that library cuts are taking place because school boards are struggling to balance their budgets as they deal with aging buildings, declining enrolment and increased student needs.

Instead of blaming boards, as she has done, why won't the minister give their students the best shot at success and put in place a policy—and funding, by the way, wouldn't be a problem—to ensure that all Ontario students have access to school libraries and trained teacher-librarians?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, I'm very happy to have this opportunity to educate the honourable member. Since coming to government, this government has increased funding for school librarians and school libraries by 12%; that, in the face of declining enrolment. I would also say to the honourable member that in addition to this commitment, over \$40 million has been committed over four years for elementary school libraries. This coming year, boards are receiving \$589 million in funding particularly for textbooks and those many resources that will be placed in libraries.

1110

Again, I say to the honourable member, we have been increasing resources to school boards. There are boards that are actually looking for innovative ways to invest in their libraries. I'm very disappointed that there are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Two key indicators of sound economic policy are job creation and attracting private sector investment. The recent global recession has highlighted our need to look beyond traditional areas of expertise. With a highly skilled workforce and an economy recovering better than most, Ontario needs to build and lead the way in creating jobs.

Minister, all hyperbole aside, how is our province's energy policy supporting workers and creating new opportunities?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for raising an exceptionally important question.

Job creation and the attraction of private sector investment are at the heart of building a strong new economy like the one we're building right here in Ontario when it comes to clean energy. That's why it almost defied belief last week when the Leader of the Opposition came out with his reckless plan to drive billions of dollars of investment out of this province and kill thousands of clean energy jobs.

I want to quote what the Windsor Star thought of this plan. They said, "Hudak's antiquated attitude toward energy doesn't just stand to harm the environment. It will be a colossal blow to this region, which is in the midst of a diversification plan driven by the green energy sector."

We stand with communities and workers across this province. Ontario families will reject their plan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Minister, clean energy is our future in Ontario, North America and around the world. Those jurisdictions astute enough to seize the opportunity for global leadership in this new economy will prosper in the decades ahead.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition babbled on about his destructive job-killing plan. Already his plan is being called everything from short-sighted to disastrous.

I don't want to see an economic tsunami sweep across Ontario. Before the member from Newmarket–Aurora has to sell his green energy shares, can you commit to continuing to champion our province as open for business and new green energy investments from around the world?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Yes, absolutely, Ontario will always be open to business under this government and under the leadership of this Premier. We reject the approach taken by the members opposite. We will fight their job-killing agenda every step of the way.

We do, however, welcome the support of the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who we now know sits on the board of directors of a clean energy company, a company that his leader wants to hammer. I wish him all the best with his feed-in-tariff project and thank him for believing in clean renewable wind energy, getting off of coal and creating jobs. Even with those feelings, we know that his views and those of his leader may not exactly align, but we welcome his support for our clean energy act. We welcome his support to help us build jobs across this province and build a stronger economy.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is also to the Minister of Energy. Last week, we showed why the job numbers you've been using to defend the sweetheart Samsung deal cannot be believed. Even those in the renewable energy industry are coming forward to say that



you've been grossly over-inflating job numbers. For instance, you said the largest solar farm in North America would have 800 jobs, but there are only eight permanent workers, which includes one guy who mows the lawn and the guy who guards the lawn mower.

The only place Samsung may have created jobs is in Windsor. Is every family in Ontario supposed to pay 46% more on their hydro bills so the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Development can shovel pork into their ridings?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The PC Party promise to tear down our clean energy economy and kill thousands of jobs in Ontario is being rejected by families right across this province. A few days ago, and even today, they had the audacity to stand in this House and suggest not only do they want to kill jobs across this province, but they're calling into question the fact that workers who are out there working very hard across this province in our clean energy economy do not even exist.

I'd like to introduce you to a young lady by the name of Misty Oakley. She's a Siliken employee with three young children. Ms. Oakley was on social assistance before securing a job at a solar manufacturing plant. She said that employment with Siliken means good security and a good future for her and her family.

We care about people like Ms. Oakley. We're going to work for people like Ms. Oakley. We're going to fight—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** What's being rejected by Ontario families is that dying government over there. Windsor families and businesses have been losing jobs and investors because of high-priced power generated by Premier McGuinty's expensive energy experiments. The local minister stood by and said nothing about the Premier's "buy high, sell low" energy policy, which has our neighbours and competitors laughing at your economic mismanagement. Ontario businesses and the families they employ are not laughing at your legacy of killing 300,000 manufacturing jobs, and yet you're still on a collision course to kill more jobs. Spain says you'll kill 2.2 jobs for every job you create. Italy says you're killing up to 6.9 manufacturing jobs with every job you claim to create.

What makes you think Ontario families should pay with their jobs for the McGuinty Liberals' seat loss prevention program?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've not only heard from members of the PC caucus; we've heard from countless workers across this province, we're hearing from Ontario families and we're hearing from numerous Ontario businesses. What they're telling us is that they do not want to go in the direction that that Leader of the Opposition's plan is going. They do not want him to kill our clean en-

ergy economy. They want to maintain the thousands of jobs that we're creating.

Today, 20 businesses in the Ottawa area sent a letter to the Leader of the Opposition, urging him to reverse his promise to kill our clean energy policy and the thousands of clean energy jobs across this province. This is what the letter says: "Mr. Hudak, business seeks a stable economic climate investment. Your party's decision has introduced uncertainty into Ontario's economic future."

If they really cared about our economy, if they really cared about jobs, if they really cared about a cleaner health—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. According to a major Workers' Action Centre report released last week, one in three low-wage workers has had wages unfairly withheld or outright stolen by employers. For some workers, that means paycheques are short hours; for others, it means being denied vacation pay or being forced to work outrageous overtime hours for no pay at all. When the Workers' Action Centre contacted the Minister of Labour to set up a meeting to discuss the deplorable situation, we would like to know why you wouldn't meet with them.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'm not aware of the request for the meeting, but I do know this: I very much value the report that was brought forward by the Workers' Action Centre. I value even more the tremendous amount of work that our workers do. Everyone who works deserves to be paid. I've acknowledged the fact that people are vulnerable out there. It's why we've doubled the number of inspectors that we have. It's why we've increased the number of inspections directly to those areas affected. It's why we've now retrieved over \$65 million in lost wages over the last number of years that we've been in power, much more than the opposite members have done when they were there.

Ninety-seven prosecutions were all that was had in those years; we've now had over 1,800. We'll continue to address those very issues, and we support our workers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Again to the Minister of Labour: According to the report, the situation in Ontario today for many workers amounts to what they call wage theft. Minister, your government has dealt a serious blow to these workers with your Open for Business legislation. You now force workers to talk to their employers first, rather than make safer, anonymous complaints.

When will this government take the plight of Ontario's vulnerable workers seriously and finally enforce its very own labour laws?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It is actually very true that we've made some changes to our Employment Standards Act. It's absolutely true that we've modernized and we've made more efficient and diversified the process.



We do want those employees to receive their funds. It's why we've made the changes to encourage that dialogue so that we can get early resolution. We've increased the number of staff required to reduce the backlog and we've encouraged dialogue between both parties.

1120

Always keep in mind that if there's intimidation or if there's lack of understanding, they do not have to go that route. We encourage them to do so. As a result, claims have been reduced, more money has been received, people are being addressed and they've now got tools available to them with our ministry to facilitate that process. We fully support our workers.

### FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know this government is committed to ensuring high-quality health care close to home. Since 2003, we've seen a number of investments in a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring this goal.

A great example of this, throughout the province, is the expansion of family health teams. These are teams of doctors, nurses and other health professionals who work together to provide better care for their patients. Minister, through the Speaker to you: Could you please tell the Legislature about how Ontario's family health teams are improving that access to health care and improving the quality of health care for the people in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Oakville for this question. I'm very happy to have the opportunity to outline how the expansion of family health teams is benefiting Ontarians.

This government has announced the creation of 200 family health teams right across this province. They're already caring for over 2.6 million Ontarians, and over half a million of those did not have a doctor before the creation of that family health team. When fully up and running, these 200 family health teams will provide care for three million people.

Family health teams are an exciting new innovation in primary care. They're ensuring that people have access to care in an interdisciplinary setting. I'm very, very proud of the work that these teams are doing, and I know that the government will continue to invest in them because they're good for the people in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I fully agree: Family health teams are providing excellent service to the people of Ontario. I have a family health team in my own riding.

Many members, I know, would like to see an expansion of family health teams in their own communities; certainly, constituents in my own community would welcome the improved access to health care that a new family health team would bring to Oakville. Would the minister please update the House on the status of family health teams in Ontario and, more specifically, within my own riding of Oakville?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** First, I'd like to congratulate the member from Oakville for his tireless advocacy for the people in his community.

The issue of a second family health team in Oakville is something I know the member is very passionate about. He's spoken to me about this on several occasions. I'm very, very happy to say that on Wednesday of this week, I will be in Oakville opening the second family health team in Oakville, the Oakmed family health team. It will have seven physicians, a nurse practitioner and other health care professionals. It will provide excellent care to the people of Oakville. In fact, this new family health team will provide care to over 9,000 people.

This is one more example of the great successes coming out of this government's family health team model. We're very proud of this work.

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development. In 2005, the minister's forest sector council noted that rising costs were undermining forestry in Ontario. Then they brought in the HST, raised the hydro prices to the point where industry can no longer compete, and brought in more and more regulation and government control, choking off the industry. The result: over 60 mills closed and 40,000 jobs lost.

Now the government is planning to transfer the cost of the road construction and maintenance program onto the struggling forest sector. Minister, your government is responsible for \$1 billion wasted in eHealth. The same \$1 billion would have provided 13 years of road construction and maintenance. How can you justify further damage to forestry and the honest, hard-working members there?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I think, as the member knows—certainly, members of the House should know that—in the past six years, this government has contributed a total of \$399.5 million towards the forest industry expenditures on the construction and maintenance of forest access roads. In fact, we uploaded those costs that had been previously downloaded by a previous government, recognizing the challenges the forestry industry faced. In each year of that program, forest industry expenditures have obviously been important. We want to make sure we continue to support them.

Certainly, we know that with the economic times, this government has had to make some tough financial decisions. We continue to support the forest industry access road funding. There may be a reduction this year, but we're going to do what we can to meet the commitments. But there's been over \$400 million over the last six years—a pretty substantial investment—in our support for the forestry sector.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Minister, it's disgraceful that you've cut this economically important program without notice to the industry. Such actions are unfair and show no respect for the economy of northern Ontario.



Your lack of respect for the north is not new. You abandoned them on Bill 191. You shut down debate on Bill 151. Last week, the Premier couldn't even be bothered to show up at FONOM. The government has treated the north poorly, but now you've decided to abandon the basic principles of fairness, warning and decency.

You didn't list these cuts in the budget just two months ago. Now it's clear who is getting stuck with the bill for your secret OPSEU deal. Minister, you are cutting programs for northern forestry so that your government can dump more cash into the Toronto unions' pork barrel.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We took the cost of the forest access roads off the backs of the forestry companies and uploaded them back to the provincial government. A previous government downloaded those costs. We have spent \$400 million on forest access roads, in addition to other forestry incentive programs. We've flowed over \$750 million to the forestry sector.

We are working closely with industry related to our modernization of the forest tenure process in the province of Ontario, listening very closely to industry in that regard as well. We are very, very proud of the support we have in the forestry sector. We have great confidence in the reinvigoration and revitalization of the forestry sector, and we'll continue to work closely with the industry in terms of the road access funding, because we recognize how important that is in terms of supporting the sector as we move forward.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The McGuinty Liberals' haphazard wood reallocation policy is costing jobs in yet another northern community. The Hudson sawmill close to Sioux Lookout has lost its wood allocation and, as a result, has filed for bankruptcy. Sioux Lookout was hit hard by the economic downturn, but now the community is being hit hard by their own government's policies, which show complete disregard for the north.

My question is simple: How does the McGuinty government justify eliminating 65 more jobs in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thanks very much for the question. Certainly, we are very, very pleased that through the wood supply competition, we've been able to make 26 separate announcements—talk to your colleague from Kenora–Rainy River—in terms of wood allocations going to Dryden Domtar; to Ignace, in terms of a pellet plant they've developed; and to many other communities in northern Ontario. We're creating new jobs and retaining many other jobs. In fact, about 1,500 jobs have been created or retained as a result of this.

We are certainly conscious of the challenges faced with the community of Sioux Lookout related to the de-

cision on the wood supply competition not going in their favour. The fact is, we are continuing to work with that community. We recognize that for any community that is not successful, that has an impact. But we cannot be more happy about the fact that we are creating thousands of jobs, putting Ontario's wood back to work, and we will continue to work with all the communities, including Sioux Lookout, that are challenged by the decisions that were made by this very, very fair, unbiased competition that was put in place under the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is a government that allowed over 40,000 jobs to walk out of northern Ontario while they did nothing. The people of Sioux Lookout are rightfully angry that the government is taking away more jobs.

Sioux Lookout Mayor Dennis Leney said that there has been some interest from First Nations in the Hudson sawmill, but this government is denying the sawmill its wood supply, which makes it impossible for the mill to get back to work.

Why doesn't this government award the wood supply to the town of Sioux Lookout and allow them to look for a financially viable operator? Why are the McGuinty Liberals so intent on destroying good jobs in Sioux Lookout as well as around northern Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** When we began the wood supply competition, which is an unprecedented amount of wood—it ended up being about nine million cubic metres of wood—we recognized that there were certain operations that had not been harvesting wood for one year, two years, sometimes three years, and there was a challenge in terms of some of those communities.

1130

We put forward the competition on the basis of—they put their application forward. Some 115 proposals came forward, and we've had a series of good-news announcements, including, as I pointed out earlier, at Dryden Domtar, which the member from Kenora–Rainy River would be pleased about, I would think, and in terms of Ignace as well. Certainly, the challenge is there with Sioux Lookout, and that's why we're continuing to work with the community.

But indeed, this is about putting our wood back to work; it's about putting workers back to work. When you look at the 1,500-plus jobs we've created or retained across the province, let alone the almost three million cubic metres of wood we've put back to work, this is a positive program that we all need to support, because we're creating work for forestry workers all across the north.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Today, People for Education put out a report stating that 56% of Ontario elementary schools



have a teacher-librarian and that this number is down from 80% little more than a decade ago.

Minister, what can I tell my constituents about this? Has our support for librarians decreased?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm very happy to respond to the question that has come from my colleague on behalf of his constituents. I would say to the honourable member that it's important to distinguish, when they speak about the reductions in support for libraries, that that in fact did take place between 1998 and 2002.

Since 2003, since we've come to government, the number of full-time equivalent teacher-librarians and library technicians has increased by over 12%, from 2,892 positions to 3,240 positions this year. It is important to note that every new school built in the province of Ontario has accommodation for a library, because our government values the resource of a library in every school.

This is in addition to the commitment of \$40 million since 2008 to support an estimated 160 positions—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Thank you, Minister. Today, the Toronto Star reported that the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is planning to dismantle all of its libraries and has laid off all but four of their library technicians. Minister, this is of great concern to my constituents in the riding of Essex, as libraries are an integral part of a school and students rely on libraries to enhance their learning.

Minister, why has the board taken this approach? Is it because of underfunding?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, following up on my previous answer, our government has only increased funding to libraries. It was the previous government that cut funding to libraries. Our government has only increased funding to libraries, and support to the Windsor Catholic board has increased by 34%, and that in the face of a declining enrolment of 17%.

We believe that it's very important to provide boards with those resources. That's why in every new school we build, we make sure that there is a library there. I'm sure that people in the community are going to be contacting the people they elected last October to have them understand that they too believe—because we've been hearing from parents about the value libraries have to support the learning of their children and their success.

#### TENDERING PROCESS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Infrastructure. Since—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It's my first time in the chair during question period. I would ask the members to be gentle. Thank you.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I'd ask for the same consideration.

Since 2005, only contractors who are a signatory to an agreement between the city of Hamilton and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America have been allowed to bid on city construction jobs. Limiting the competitive bid process could end up inflating the cost of the Pan Am stadium and velodrome stadium projects planned for Hamilton by millions of dollars. I'd like to know, from the Minister of Infrastructure: Can he give us his assurance that no contractor will be shut out of the bidding process for these projects and that Infrastructure Ontario will ensure a fair and open bidding process?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm pleased to answer that question. First of all, I want to say that the province of Ontario has had a very positive working relationship with the municipalities. Municipalities in Ontario have the right to make rules with respect to procurement and with respect to agreements with labour groups in their community. They've had that right for a considerable period of time.

We will work closely with the city of Hamilton on all infrastructure projects. In areas where the city has the right to make arrangements with labour groups or unions, we will respect the municipalities in that regard.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** In that case, the minister will listen to the city of Hamilton, which is claiming that the carpenters' union monopoly agreement has cost the city as much as \$10 million during a regular construction year. Applying that same monopoly agreement to the Pan Am projects will potentially inflate those projects by millions of dollars to the taxpayers of Ontario.

Will the minister, based on his assurance that he respects municipalities, undertake to ensure that all Pan Am Games infrastructure projects will be subject to an open bidding process in this province?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The member should know that the construction industry across Ontario is extremely happy with our infrastructure program and our infrastructure spending. We have had, in the province of Ontario and across Canada, the most successful infrastructure program in the history of Canada, in the history of Ontario. It's been exceptional.

We in the ministry have received almost no complaints whatsoever from the construction industry. Those complaints that we've received, we have met with individuals and we're working out any concerns that they might have.

This has been the infrastructure government: the best infrastructure government in the history of the province of Ontario.

#### LABOUR RELATIONS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail. During the Vale Inco strike in Voisey's Bay, former Newfoundland premier Danny Williams set up an industrial inquiry commission to examine the strike. The commission reported that labour laws need to

change to ensure foreign corporations “respond to Canadian labour relations values.”

In comparison, the Ontario government did nothing during or after the strike and left 3,000 workers on the picket lines for a year, to the detriment of the Sudbury economy and community. Unlike the Newfoundland government, Ontario’s government has buried its head in the sand and said that everything is good with our labour laws.

Will the minister review the protracted strikes and lockouts in our province?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** On this side of the House, we are indeed very proud of the extensive work we’ve done with our labour groups. In Ontario, over the last eight years, we’ve had the best labour peace that we’ve had in all history. Ninety-nine per cent of all labour negotiations are done without lockout or strike, and we continue to advance on that cause. In situations where there are disputes, we have our mediators, our professional staff, available to them at all times.

We will continue to support the outstanding men and women who work in this province, who provide an excellent degree of service and make us competitive on the world stage, including those individuals in Sudbury.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In Ontario we see a pattern of long strikes and lockouts. We see a new industry: providing security guards and replacement workers during strikes and lockouts. In Sudbury, Brantford, Vaughan, Trenton, Nanticoke, Toronto, Brampton, Mississauga, Bowmanville, Pembroke, Sarnia and Hamilton, we see protracted labour disputes, but the minister says all is good with our labour laws.

Will the McGuinty government follow Newfoundland’s lead and set up a commission of inquiry to examine all of those prolonged, protracted labour disputes here in Ontario?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We will continue to support our labour groups. We’ll also continue to support the contracts that are in place. We will continue to support those workers and what makes Ontario competitive. We will have our contracts.

What we won’t do is go back to the days when there was constant disruption and constant disputes or to the time when the NDP, when they were ripping up their contracts and introducing social contracts. That is not what this side is about. We are not going to propose any more antagonism. We certainly want fair agreements. We want people to negotiate at collective bargaining, and we encourage the collective bargaining process.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, you recently appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates, where you tabled the average annual savings and costs by household income as a result of our government’s comprehensive tax reform package. Minister, you showed that, for households in Ontario with an income of \$150,000 or less, families will

break even or be ahead with this package. You also mentioned a list of prominent politicians, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his finance minister, who are supportive of the tax harmonization.

We know the federal Conservatives support tax harmonization. Will the minister tell us who else of note supports harmonization?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I want to take this opportunity to thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans. He’s doing a great job in his riding, and he’s letting his constituents know about the HST and our comprehensive tax package. He’s doing a great job, so thank you very much for that.

The member is right: We did receive a lot of federal support. In fact, the federal government played a crucial role in supporting Ontario’s move to adopting the HST. It provided Ontario with some generous incentives to harmonize, such as \$4.3 billion in transition support and agreeing to administer the HST at no charge, among other things.

Here’s what Minister Flaherty, Canada’s Minister of Finance, said: “I have long said provincial sales tax harmonization is the single most important step provinces with retail sales taxes could take to improve the competitiveness of Canadian businesses.”

The real question is, where do they stand?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Minister, if the total household income is less than \$150,000 on average, a family breaks even or is slightly ahead with our new tax reform package. I note that this is because our tax package includes \$12 billion in tax relief for Ontario families.

I also know that Jack Mintz, an economist, has reviewed our comprehensive tax package and said that the HST will strengthen our economy over the next 10 years, as it will (1) attract an additional \$47 billion in investment and (2) add 600,000 jobs to our economy over that 10 years, and (3) the earning power of Ontarians would be increased 10%.

Minister, this all seems positive, yet the opposition parties are not supporting it—a rookie mistake if I ever saw one.

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** There were a couple of other quotes I wanted to use in the first question. The first one is from a member whom I have a lot of great respect for, and that’s the member for Newmarket—Aurora. He says, “No one can argue with wanting a more simplified tax process. I think we all support that.” I would agree.

The other quote I’d like to share is from Senator Bob Runciman. He said, “I think, in theory, our party is supportive of harmonization.”

But here’s someone I think we all respect. He says, “The HST, which many people love to hate, is nonetheless good economic and tax policy if we want to create jobs in the province of Ontario. And you know what, it took some courage to do it.” That was John Tory at the CivicAction summit.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Ontario fruit wineries that are here at Queen's Park today for the selection of the Ontario legislative fruit wine. The PC caucus has been pleased to work with them, and I'm looking forward to speaking with them this evening and enjoying great Ontario fruit wines.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I'm pleased to welcome Ms. Joung-Ran Lim, Mr. Han Park, Mr. Young-Woo Kim and Mr. Edmund Luk from Richmond Hill to the House today.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to introduce a very good friend—and a very excellent farm operation in my riding of Durham—Jim Millson, who's on the Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It gives me special pleasure to introduce to the House, in the members' east gallery, Tea Rosic, who is serving as my student intern. Her brother Andrej had previously served as a legislative page in this House. I welcome her on her first visit to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I, too, would like to introduce someone from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario: John Palmer, who represents—I'm not sure of the number of the district, but it's Waterloo and Oxford. He's done a wonderful job for a great number of years. We thank you very much for being with us today, John.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I guess it's my turn to introduce a dairy farmer. He's one of the big shots in the associations, and he's got this growing agenda of the number of things he's done in farming in the riding of Brant, the province of Ontario and the country of Canada: Mr. Bill Emmott. Thanks very much for joining us, Bill. You're going to take grief for that, I know.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to introduce a friend of mine, a councillor from the township of Enniskillen, John Phair, in the west members' gallery. He's also a journalist with the Ontario Farmer.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'd like to introduce several members of the arts and culture community in Oakville who will be joining us momentarily: Megan Whittington from the Oakville Arts Council; Bernadette Shaw from the Oakville Arts Council; Jean Gandubert from Community Arts Space; Heather Hogan from the Halton Multicultural Council; and Wan Shi Liu from Sheridan College.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I welcome back again this afternoon—because they didn't get enough this morning—Gisèle Hébert from my local children's aid society, and Rick Sapinski, the chair of our children's aid society. Great folks from my riding of Nipissing.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### DAIRY FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On behalf of the PC caucus, I'm pleased to rise today to thank the Dairy Farmers of Ontario for coming to Queen's Park and to recognize their contribution to our province.

Dairy is the largest agricultural sector in Ontario. Over 4,800 dairy farmers produce 2.5 billion litres of milk each year, enough to fill the Rogers Centre twice.

The Dairy Farmers also contribute to our province in other ways. They operate the very successful elementary school milk program, which gets milk into 70% of Ontario schools, and I know they are looking to increase that percentage to ensure that even more Ontario children get access to nutritious milk.

Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak and I will be looking forward to meeting with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario this afternoon, and the PC Party will reiterate our commitment to supply management.

We are looking forward to hearing more about some of their great programs, including the new farmer quota program, which is an initiative that the DFO started to help young farmers who may not have the resources to get into dairy farming. We're also looking forward to hearing what the government can do to help them.

Dairy farmers, like all farmers, are impacted by increasing hydro rates and smart meters. In fact, a dairy farmer recently had a smart meter installed and called my colleague from Simcoe—Grey to ask the Premier how he was supposed to teach his cows to tell time.

Again, I thank the Dairy Farmers for coming to Queen's Park. Tim Hudak and I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon.

### THE CHILDREN'S STOREFRONT

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to take the time today to recognize the efforts of an organization that has been providing outstanding services for parents and children in my community, The Children's Storefront.

The Children's Storefront has been an icon for Trinity-Spadina parents for about 35 years. As the first child-parent centre in Ontario, the Storefront paved the way for many of the free programs now in existence.

The Storefront's mission has always been to be accessible to all families with young children. It's for that reason that they do not charge a fee for their services. There is no structured programming at the Storefront, which means that everyone is welcome at any time. For parents adapting to the needs of their young children, this kind of scheduling is welcomed with open arms. The Storefront receives visits from 7,000 adults and 12,000 children a year. Run on a shoestring budget, available monies have been carefully and deliberately spent on children's literature and timeless toys.

The importance of the centre was made obvious when the entire community rallied to raise \$250,000 to pay for a new venue when the old one burned down in a fire. I wish The Children's Storefront, its staff and participants all the best for continued success in their new location at Bloor and Shaw St., and for the continued success of their programs.

#### HAN PARK

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to recognize the extraordinary achievements of one of my constituents, Mr. Han Gil Park, who is a grade 12 student at Richmond Green Secondary School in Richmond Hill.

As we all know, the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan devastated many across the world, especially those in the affected areas. The two tragic events killed more than 10,000 people and affected many Canadians here and abroad.

To help these victims, Han Gil Park decided to undertake a project to help those who were left without shelter or food. Initially, this good Samaritan had planned to raise \$1,000 in one week by folding paper cranes and asking for donations amongst his peers at school. His fundraising mission took off rapidly in the school and, with the helping hands of fellow schoolmates, he eventually raised more than \$1,800 and reached his goal of folding more than 1,000 paper cranes.

One of the teachers, Ms. Morris, was most helpful in assisting with the paper crane fundraising project. Mr. Parks's efforts and accomplishments set a fine example to the youth in our society, and show us how connected and caring the youth today are.

On behalf of all Ontarians and the residents of Richmond Hill, I would like to thank Han Gil Park for his dedication and devotion.

#### NORTH GRENVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise today to celebrate the opening of the North Grenville Public Library. Last week, I was excited to have the opportunity for a sneak peek of this wonderful facility, which doesn't officially open until May 28. I attended the groundbreaking of the \$5.1-million library in the heart of Old Town Kemptville last June. Ever since, anticipation has grown as each new brick has been added to that 10,000-square-foot building.

The opening of this state-of-the-art library is the final chapter in a story that began as a dream some 10 years ago. Having seen the inside, I can assure people who have worked so hard over the past decade one thing: You won't be disappointed. The fabulous new library provides the perfect space for minds young and old to expand their horizons.

This, however, is a tale about creating more than a building. Governments, including the forward-thinking municipality, provided \$4 million for the bricks and mortar, and for over three years, the Room to Read cam-

paign has raised \$1 million to give the library the books, the technology and the furnishings that are at its heart.

With each donation, whether it was the toonie that the youngster gave at a yard sale or the amazing \$150,000 gift from the Norenberg family, for whom the building will be named, the campaign was building something else. They've created a more tightly connected community by proving that great things happen when people work together for a good cause.

For everyone involved, I say congratulations. I look forward to checking out my first book there soon.

#### BUDDHA'S LIGHT VEGETARIAN FOOD FAIR

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Yesterday, I attended the Buddha's Light vegetarian food fair at the Fo Guang Shan Temple in the village of Meadowvale. We were kindly welcomed by Abbess Chueh Chu and by some 4,000 community members who attended the fair throughout the day.

#### 1310

Despite the wet weather, guests enjoyed the temple's atmosphere of serenity, peace and harmony. The fair's opening ceremonies always include a multi-faith world peace blessing. Representatives of different faiths brought their greetings. Traditional practices of bathing the Buddha, a peace bell blessing and a spectacular dragon dance also adorned the occasion.

The Buddha's Light International Association presented a cheque to the University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work for \$30,000 for programs to help immigrant students and families. Guests enjoyed the famous food fair and dined on an assortment of traditional vegetarian oriental foods along with community members.

The Fo Guang Shan's food fair and Chinese New Year celebration are annual events. Guests share the temple and its Buddhist community's compassion and tranquility. The temple has a library, souvenir shop and tea room open year-round to the public. The Fo Guang Shan temple is a landmark of beauty and humility that brightens our community in Meadowvale.

#### GASOLINE TAX

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The McGuinty government's harmonized sales tax adds 8% to the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel in Ontario. This means that the McGuinty government is siphoning an estimated \$1.5 billion from the wallets of Ontario drivers every year.

You might think that a government with a windfall of that size would at least take the extra gas revenue and spend it on better roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure in our rural communities of Ontario. They have all this money, yet, a deficit. But this government is so out of touch that they're wasting hard-earned taxpayers' money on expensive energy experiments, secret Samsung deals, more pay increases, more red tape and bigger bureaucracy.



Over 100 municipalities endorsed the resolution asking the government to invest some of its HST revenue from gas and diesel into transportation infrastructure. The resolution is being circulated by the CAA South Central Ontario and the Ontario Good Roads Association.

Like the vast majority of Ontarians, I know Ontario can't afford this HST and we certainly can't afford a government that collects an extra \$1.5 billion at the gas pump and won't share it with the motorists who really put the money in in the first place. I remain very concerned that Premier McGuinty will raise your taxes, despite all the Liberal promises. I remain concerned. That's what he's always done. That's what he'll continue to do: raise the taxes every time he gets a chance.

#### ANDREW FLECK CHILD CARE SERVICES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to recognize Andrew Fleck Child Care Services, which is celebrating their 100th anniversary of service to Ottawa's families. Since the beginning, they have been a vital, progressive and compassionate service for generations of Ottawa's children.

Opening in November 1911, they came into being to serve a very new need: proper care for children whose mothers had no choice but to work to support their families. Through poverty or the absence of a husband or father, these women faced very dire choices, and it's a point of pride that this service began to assist these women in difficult circumstances. The driving force in these early years was Gertrude Fleck, who in 1931 donated the building they still occupy in the name of her late husband Andrew. The organization may bear his name, but it was her life's work.

Andrew Fleck Child Care Services now has a full-time staff of 120 people, operates 11 programs in six locations and provides a continuum of child care, information, support and early years services to over 4,300 children and 27,000 families in Ottawa each year. They strive for high-quality, affordable, accessible, accountable and inclusive child care that promotes the optimum physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the child, something I'm proud to say this government believes in also. I would like to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### BLADDER CANCER

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I'd like to welcome David Guttman and Jack Moon to the House today; both are bladder cancer survivors. Together they started the Canadian Bladder Cancer Network, or CBCAN, a nationally registered charity to raise awareness of bladder cancer.

What many Ontarians may not realize is that according to Cancer Care Ontario, bladder cancer is the ninth most common cancer in Canada and it's the third most common cancer facing men. Unfortunately, bladder

cancer doesn't have the profile of other cancers, such as breast or prostate cancer. That's why the work of the Canadian Bladder Cancer Network is so important.

An Ontario-wide media campaign started on May 9 and will continue until June 1. On Saturday, May 28, the CBCAN will commemorate Bladder Cancer Awareness Day and will hold the first major bladder cancer education meeting in Canada.

CBCAN continues to raise awareness of this cancer and help those living with the disease. Last September, the group held its first awareness walk. In fact, the largest walk raised over \$10,000 right here in Toronto. This fall, CBCAN will hold walks all over Canada to further raise awareness and funds to support research into the cure for this disease. CBCAN has also helped patients in remote places to locate and connect with specialists in health care centres that specialize in bladder cancer.

On behalf of all Ontarians, I'd like to thank our guests for their commitment to raising awareness of bladder cancer. Of course, we all know that more needs to be done but CBCAN has certainly started us well on our way.

#### OAKVILLE ARTS AND CULTURE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** In the members' gallery this afternoon, I just introduced several members from the dynamic arts and culture community in Oakville. Earlier in the session, I had the opportunity to host a round table. We discussed the challenges, the dreams, the strategies and the vision for the future of arts in my community. The round table was held in partnership with the Oakville Arts Council and set up to provide a local united voice for advocating and promoting the welfare of the arts.

We know the importance of the arts. As Megan Whittington of the Oakville Arts Council put it at the round table, arts and culture help to regenerate communities. Cultural industries create job growth and they turn ordinary cities into destination cities. The arts also help keep people happy and healthy. The participants work together to propose ideas that would benefit the arts and culture community.

These ideas were formed into an excellent policy brief. This brief will be submitted to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for his review.

I'd like to thank Megan of the Oakville Arts Council for the partnership on the round table and my sincere thanks to the many participants in the development of this policy brief. I think it's going to make Oakville a better community.

#### MOTIONS

##### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding meeting

times for the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that in addition to its regular meeting time, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2011, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Monday, May 16, 2011.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 66. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** A point of order?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Okay. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, I apologize for not saying what I was asking for.

Things move so quickly here, but the member for Wellington–Halton Hills does have a bill to be introduced and I'm asking for unanimous consent to allow that to happen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the members of the House for allowing that. I was just distracted for a minute and I apologize.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### BANNING COLLUSION IN ELECTORAL ADVERTISING ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 INTERDISANT LA COLLUSION DANS LE CADRE DE LA PUBLICITÉ ÉLECTORALE

Mr. Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to ban collusion in electoral advertising / Projet de loi 195, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections pour interdire la collusion dans le cadre de la publicité électorale.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

1320

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The bill amends the Election Finances Act to ban third parties from colluding with a registered political party, a constituency association or a candidate when engaging in third party election advertising.

It also extends the limit that section 38 of the act imposes on campaign expenses incurred by a registered party, and persons or bodies acting on its behalf during a campaign period, to include advertising expenses incurred by a third party during a campaign period, if the third party acted with the express or implied knowledge and consent of a registered party.

The chief financial officer of every party, constituency association or candidate is required to include those expenses in the financial statement that section 42 of the act requires the officer to file with the chief elections officer.

## PETITIONS

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to introduce this petition.

## ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Michael Prue:** J'ai une pétition ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés garantit l'accès à un enseignement public de langue française;

« Attendu qu'il y a, depuis des années, une pénurie sérieuse d'écoles publiques de langue française à Toronto;



« Attendu que le Toronto District School Board a déclaré que l'école Essex West school et le Toronto West collegiate institute ne sont pas nécessaires à leurs fins dans le sens du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation encadrant l'aliénation de biens immeubles excédentaires;

« Attendu que le Conseil scolaire Viamonde a déclaré son intérêt à se prévaloir de la priorité que lui accorde le règlement 444 pour acquérir ces propriétés;

« Attendu que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario a confirmé à maintes reprises, au cours de la dernière décennie, que des fonds étaient disponibles pour que le conseil puisse acquérir de nouvelles écoles aussitôt que des édifices adéquats seraient disponibles;

« Nous, soussignés, membres de la communauté francophone et francophile du grand Toronto, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario respecte les garanties données au conseil par son ministère de l'Éducation et permette l'achat par le conseil des édifices du Essex West school et du Toronto West collegiate institute dans le respect de l'esprit et de la lettre du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation de l'Ontario ».

Je suis d'accord et je vais signer.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails"—and the Sarnia jail—"with no public input; and

"Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million in wages spent there; and

"Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders will have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene will be too great; and

"Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton" and Sarnia jails and lets them remain open until such time as a new regional correctional facility can be opened.

I agree with this, support it with my signature and send it down with Allison.

### ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Rosario Marchese:** « Pétition pour des écoles publiques françaises adéquates :

« Attendu que l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés garantit l'accès à un enseignement public de langue française;

« Attendu qu'il y a, depuis des années, une pénurie sérieuse d'écoles publiques de langue française à Toronto;

« Attendu que le Toronto District School Board a déclaré que l'école Essex West school et le Toronto West collegiate institute ne sont pas nécessaires à leurs fins dans le sens du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation encadrant l'aliénation de biens immeubles excédentaires;

« Attendu que le Conseil scolaire Viamonde a déclaré son intérêt à se prévaloir de la priorité que lui accorde le règlement 444 pour acquérir ces propriétés;

« Attendu que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario a confirmé à maintes reprises, au cours de la dernière décennie, que des fonds étaient disponibles pour que le conseil puisse acquérir de nouvelles écoles aussitôt que des édifices adéquats seraient disponibles;

« Nous, soussignés, membres de la communauté francophone et francophile du grand Toronto, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario respecte les garanties données au conseil par son ministère de l'Éducation et permette l'achat par le conseil des édifices du Essex West school et du Toronto West collegiate institute dans le respect de l'esprit et de la lettre du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation de l'Ontario ».

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present petitions on behalf of my riding of Durham, and more specifically from Lou Speziale. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle"—

often known as Morgans Road—"and Lakeridge Road in Durham" region.

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and present it to one of the pages, Allison.

### ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça me fait plaisir de présenter une pétition des francophones et francophiles de Toronto, qui est à 1 621 noms, pour des écoles publiques françaises adéquates :

« Attendu que l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés garantit l'accès à un enseignement public de langue française;

« Attendu qu'il y a, depuis des années, une pénurie sérieuse d'écoles publiques de langue française à Toronto;

« Attendu que le Toronto District School Board a déclaré que l'école Essex West school et le Toronto West collegiate institute ne sont pas nécessaires à leurs fins dans le sens du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation encadrant l'aliénation de biens immeubles excédentaires;

« Attendu que le Conseil scolaire Viamonde a déclaré son intérêt à se prévaloir de la priorité que lui accorde le règlement 444 pour acquérir ces propriétés;

« Attendu que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario a confirmé à maintes reprises, au cours de la dernière décennie, que des fonds étaient disponibles pour que le conseil puisse acquérir de nouvelles écoles aussitôt que des édifices adéquats seraient disponibles;

« Nous, soussignés, membres de la communauté francophone et francophile du grand Toronto, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario respecte les garanties données au conseil par son ministère de l'Éducation et permette l'achat par le conseil des édifices du Essex West school et du Toronto West collegiate institute dans le respect de l'esprit et de la lettre du règlement 444 de la Loi sur l'éducation de l'Ontario ».

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais y afficher mon nom et je demande à Rachel de l'amener à la Greffière.

1330

### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to present this petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'd like to thank Alison Saunders of Kenninghall Boulevard in Streetsville for having signed and sent it to me. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

It's a reasonable request; I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jonathan to carry it for me.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Another group of petitions from the riding of Durham reads as follows:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

This is similar to the resolution by Tim Hudak, and it's submitted on behalf of Heather Rutherford and others in my riding of Durham.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition qui m'a été remise par Conrad Mazerolle de l'AEFO :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative « de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »



J'appuie cette pétition, je vais y afficher mon nom et je demande à Melanie de l'amener au Greffier.

## TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Fortunately, I have another petition here that I could read, and it is similar to the other one as well. It says:

"Whereas Premier McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again"—surprise—"with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy and use every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements," and the list goes on;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to" and have respect for "Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign in support of it and present it to Hamza.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, May 19, 2011, during its regular meeting time for the purpose of public hearings on the bill, and at 2 p.m. on Monday, May 30, 2011, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2011. At 5 p.m. on Monday, May 30, 2011, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment for clause-by-clause consideration on Monday, May 30, 2011. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, May 31, 2011. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 75. Debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** After, I guess, three days that we've debated this bill in the House, and it's been debated for six and a half hours—this is May 16, 2011. This problem has been going on in Ontario for, let me see, seven, eight, nine years, and has been getting worse every year.

In 2009, I believe, there were studies published that showed that 50% of the tobacco in the butts outside of schoolyards and other public buildings was illegal tobacco. There are a huge number of areas that this impacts in the province of Ontario. This has been ongoing, and now the government has come up with a bill which I suspect may not be all that successful.

If we take a look at the illegal tobacco distribution as we see it in Ontario today, we see state trucks and tractor-trailers travelling around the province. These are large vehicles that are carrying contraband tobacco. They come out of one or two locations. They come out of Indian reserves—Six Nations and the Indian reserve in



eastern Ontario that sits on the border between Quebec, Ontario and the United States. Apparently, the RCMP cannot seize the trucks that move between Indian reservations, but if they're not moving between Indian reservations they can be seized, and for some reason they are not being seized.

This bill talks about the ability of police officers. When they find illegal cigarettes on an individual, they can phone a revenue agent and get permission to seize the cigarettes and fine the person from whom they're seizing the cigarettes. It seems like a rather difficult process to go through in order to achieve the removal of a pack of cigarettes, or half a pack of cigarettes, that an individual might be carrying on him at any given time. Meanwhile, the tractor-trailers and state trucks travel up and down our highways, seemingly unavailable to be pulled over and searched and the perpetrators charged.

1340

But aside from those rather obvious weaknesses in this bill, there are a number of other impacts that illegal cigarettes have on our society. Perhaps one of the most important and one of the most dastardly impacts they have is on young people. Young people find these cigarettes in vans, trunks of cars, pickup trucks, what have you, always parked near a schoolyard. Whether or not these can be found by police, whether or not they can be found by the RCMP, or whether or not they can be found by revenue agents seems to be up to some question, but almost every grade 8 or grade 9 student in Ontario knows where to find these vans. It seems to me that if they can buy a pack of cigarettes as easily as they can buy a pack of gum, that's probably not a good thing for the young people in Ontario, and I think the government knows this. I think it's a shame that this government has waited until the eighth year of its mandate to take action on this scourge that is taking place in Ontario.

It also teaches young people that there's a law for some things and there's not a law for other things. It doesn't teach them any respect in any general way for a law that operates in Ontario.

The other thing that comes to mind is that when you're buying illegal cigarettes from somebody who operates with immunity, or supposed immunity, near a schoolyard, it would seem to me that you could probably buy other things from that individual as well. He may not have them in stock, but I think you could probably buy just about whatever illegal drug you wanted to buy, for delivery at some later date or at some other location. Once you have a delivery system for illegal materials, it would seem to me that it would be fairly easy to expand the products that you're selling into other illegal activities, and that also would impact our young people in a very, very negative way.

It also has a significant impact on the taxpayers of Ontario. Every single taxpayer in Ontario is paying a price for illegal cigarettes. This government could have done something about that over the eight years that it has been in power in Ontario, over eight years where this problem has grown from being somewhat insignificant,

with perhaps 5%, 6%, 7% of cigarettes being smuggled or being illegal contraband cigarettes, to the point now where it represents almost 50% of the cigarettes in Ontario. The last number I saw, I think, was 48-point-something-something per cent of the cigarettes sold in Ontario were illegal tobacco. For taxpayers, that means a tremendous amount of lost revenue, perhaps \$1 billion of lost revenue.

Now, \$1 billion used to be a very significant part of our budget. When this government came to power—the last budget that we brought into this province, into this House, was \$68 billion. That was the budget for Ontario. Today, that budget has skyrocketed to \$124 billion, I think it was, last March. So \$1 billion is a smaller percentage of that budget, but it is still a very, very significant amount of money. You could build a very modern, say, 400-bed hospital, with that kind of money. Certainly, that kind of money would expand the Milton hospital to a point where it could actually handle the number of baby births that are occurring in Milton. That would be a good thing, if we could control that tax from the lost sale of cigarettes. It's had that very negative impact on taxpayers over those eight years, and growing in importance, where today it is slightly in excess—the numbers I've been given seem to be slightly in excess of \$1 billion. So every taxpayer in Ontario is paying a price for these illegal cigarettes that are being distributed across this province.

Contraband tobacco also has a tremendous impact on public security. It means that this unparalleled source of revenue from illegal or contraband cigarettes is flowing into the coffers of organized crime. First of all, I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out that if you have illegal cigarettes being distributed across Ontario, you need a distribution system that is extremely well organized. That distribution system is rumoured to be organized by the Hells Angels in the distribution system they have had for other products. This illegal money from contraband tobacco is flowing into the coffers of that organization.

That organization is also involved in other illegal activities that speak to the cost of doing business. Their costs of doing business are reduced because they have further business to do. The more business they do, the lower their cost of distribution can be. So it has a tremendous impact on public security and the ability of people to fight organized crime. The more money that organized crime has, of course, the more sophisticated they can be. This huge amount of money that is flowing into the coffers of organized crime is a huge detriment to the people of Ontario and for the public security of the people of Ontario. That's a very negative impact on Ontario, and has been a growing negative impact over the last eight years, starting out at a rather insignificant level of less than 5% of the tobacco sold in Ontario and growing to the point where it now represents 50%, or very close to 50%, of the tobacco sold in Ontario.

It also has a very negative impact on convenience store operators in Ontario. Convenience store operators have been servicing Ontario for many years. This govern-



ment has put restrictions on how they sell cigarettes. You can't see them anymore; they have to be behind a curtain or behind a door. Those impacts, I think, have been rather negative. They've been rather incidental and very minimal, but nonetheless, convenience stores have seen a tremendous drop in their sale of cigarettes, which is a major income provider for them—it's a legal product being sold in Ontario in this case—and that has had a very negative impact on convenience store operators.

Those store operators have had a couple of issues. One, they were criticized years ago for supposedly selling cigarettes to minors, and they implemented a program that checks the ID of anyone who purchases tobacco products. In independent testing—someone going in trying to buy tobacco from a convenience store and being asked to show ID—I think that over 96% of tobacco sales were found to be legitimate, in that they did not sell to young people. You can compare that 96% and put it in perspective: The other place they tested was the LCBO, with an underage person trying to buy alcohol, and the success of a younger underage person buying alcohol in LCBO stores—they came out at an 86% level, significantly below the convenience stores level of checking ID and making sure that young people didn't buy tobacco in the case of convenience stores and alcohol in the case of the LCBO.

1350

So they did a very good job, in my estimation, of checking to make sure that young people weren't buying legal tobacco. Of course, the person who was selling illegal tobacco from the back of his van, out of the trunk of his car or the back of his pickup truck doesn't actually check for identification or age. If the money's on the counter, he takes the money and sells them the tobacco. That's how that system works, and that's what's so very, very wrong about it.

The convenience store association in Ontario has had tremendous negative impact from the sale of illegal tobacco, to the point where, last year, two convenience stores per day went out of business in Ontario—two convenience stores per day. That's a very significant rate. It's a very significant problem, and this government hasn't done anything about that, until the very last three weeks of their term of eight years that this problem has been a factor in this province. It's a growing problem, a growing crime, and it has had a growing impact on these people, whether it be young people, whether it be taxpayers, whether it be our security in the province, whether it be our honest merchants in our convenience stores.

It's also been a problem over the last eight years for the aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities are seen as being the site of distribution of this product. I don't think it takes anyone's imagination to understand that there are very, very few people—a very small percentage of the people—on a given reserve who would be impacted by this. They would all be impacted, but there would be very few of them who would be involved in the distribution of illegal cigarettes. That means that the vast

majority—I've heard estimates of 90% or 95%—of First Nations living on reserves are negatively impacted. They live in fear. They live in trepidation about what is going to happen to their children and what's going to happen to their lives as this illegal activity gains more and more ground and continues to have a larger and larger influence on the activities that take place on their reserve.

I would suggest to the government that some of the elements that have the greatest impact against them in a negative way when this scourge of illegal tobacco comes to their doorstep—whether it be manufacturing or whether it be transportation, no matter how it gets there, it has a very negative impact on the vast majority of First Nations who live on our reserves. I think that's also a great crime that this government hasn't done anything about.

I would suggest that the sixth area that has a negative impact on the people of Ontario is the impact that it has on our social fabric in Ontario. It means that the citizens of Ontario lose faith in their government's ability to enforce the law of the land and lose faith in their ability to protect individuals.

I come back to the case of Chartwell-Brown, the couple who was living on non-First Nations land, non-reserve land, just outside of Caledonia. They were living on the wrong side of the barricade. The Ontario Provincial Police failed to provide adequate protection for them. After two years or so of this treatment—two or three years, I think—they went to court, suing the OPP for lack of action. After two or three days in court, the Ontario government settled the issue by paying off Chartwell-Brown to drop the case. They were suing the government for \$7 million. We don't know what that settlement was, because the government made it secret.

Whatever Chartwell and Brown got in settlement was paid out of government revenues, and I would hasten to remind the government that all government revenues come out of the pockets of the taxpayers of Ontario. Whether it comes through gas tax or whether it comes through personal income tax or whether it comes through that lovely new issue that you have, the HST, the revenue, even the corporate sales taxes and business taxes, comes out of a portion of the profits of those businesses, and the profits of those businesses came from the pockets of Ontario taxpayers. So, one way or the other, those tax dollars came out of Ontario taxpayers' pockets.

I suggest to the government, as I have done before, that Ontario taxpayers deserve to know how their money is being spent and therefore deserve to know what that settlement with Chartwell-Brown was. To keep something like that a secret—it's like the Samsung contract. It's a secret. The way the minister is answering the questions in the House today and last week, I'm not sure that the minister knows what's in that contract. That contract with Samsung is secret. It supposedly deals with \$7 billion. One way or another, that \$7 billion has some impact on the people of Ontario, the taxpayers of Ontario and the voters of Ontario. For that to be a secret contract and for the people of Ontario not to know how the government is



operating with that amount of money, a significant portion of the provincial budget, which I mentioned before is about \$124 billion, I think—\$7 billion is 6.25% of that total budget; 5.25%, I think—that's a significant amount. Why this government has kept that secret, and how they would have the unmitigated gall to keep that secret, I don't know. I don't understand that kind of government. I think government should be open and respectful of taxpayers' money.

To summarize, I would say that the government has acted very slowly on this. Now, all of a sudden, we have to go fast because we have a time allocation motion before us, so we have to hurry down the line and get this piece of legislation passed.

As has been pointed out in previous debates by this side of the House and by the third party, there are some serious loopholes in this piece of legislation as to whether or not it will have any positive impact on the flow of contraband tobacco. I think that anything that has a negative impact on the flow of contraband tobacco is probably a good thing, but I think we could be much more effective when we know that there are tractor-trailers coming out of certain places, and we know where those places are. The RCMP has lots of information on that that they're willing to share with almost anyone. It's in the papers every once in a while; you can read about it.

We think that those factories that manufacture at those shipping points that come across from the US—apparently 90% of it comes across from the US at one or two border points. It should be easy, or it shouldn't be a huge difficulty, to shut some of that down. This government doesn't seem to be able to do that, and that's too bad for Ontario. It's too bad for the young people of Ontario. It's too bad for the taxpayers of Ontario. It has a negative impact. It's too bad for the public security of Ontario. It has a tremendously negative impact, and it really is a crime as to what it's doing to the convenience store operators—families, in many cases, running a small convenience store. They're under huge pressure, with at least two stores a day going bankrupt or shutting down in Ontario. That has been going on for the last year and a half or so, and that's a shame.

It has been a shame for aboriginal communities. As I mentioned, they're perhaps one of the hardest hit, because they live in fear. They live in an area in which—and which I don't understand—while a very few people on the reserves, as a percentage of the population that is on the reserves, are being negatively impacted, it's also a shame as to what it's doing to our social fabric.

1400

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time. I look forward to further debate on this. I would look forward to further time debating it—perhaps we could strengthen the law—but this time allocation motion is going to stop all that later today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak, first, to the time allocation motion

and, secondly, to the bill itself in the context of time allocation.

The bill itself, Bill 186, is entitled "illegal tobacco." I think the gist of the story is that this government wants people across Ontario to believe that finally, after many, many years of doing nothing about the distribution of illegal tobacco, illegal cigarettes and black market cigarettes in the province, it is in fact doing something. After all, it's just before an election, and that's when you usually find these kinds of bills that have a fancy title and are intended to lead people to believe that something is going to be done.

Unfortunately, when you read this bill, there's not much there. In fact, it's fair to say there is next to nothing there. I would say that this legislation is again, shall we say, just a preparation-for-election bill. It's not going to do anything substantive, and it's not going to do anything meaningful. It will give Liberal candidates the opportunity to say, in the run-up to the election, "We passed a bill to deal with illegal cigarettes and illegal tobacco." But in functional terms, it's not going to do much.

That's probably why we're facing time allocation here. People understand that after this the Legislature might sit for four or five more days before we recess for the summer, and then there's going to be an election. I think that one of the reasons we're seeing time allocation on this bill, and not seeing the discussion and debate one would want to have on such a serious issue, is because the government just wants to get it through and really doesn't care that there isn't much substance to the bill. I think that's the reason for time allocation.

The government says, "Look, it's not much of a bill. It's not going to do much." The most substantive part of the bill is the title, which is intended to give the impression that the government is starting to take the problem of illegal tobacco and illegal cigarettes seriously. So, let's just ram it through.

Well, I don't think that's a very good idea. I don't think it's a good idea, because what it does is create a precedent where you don't have to have thoughtful reflection on legislation, you don't have to have thoughtful analysis of the problems and thoughtful analysis of what needs to be done, and you don't have to have thoughtful analysis about what the repercussions are going to be. You don't have to have thoughtful analysis about what the impact will be on the public: what positives, what negatives, what's going to happen here? I think that when you see this kind of stuff over and over again—and we've seen lots of it this spring—this is what leads to the public cynicism we see out there. This is what leads to people saying, "I just give up. I don't want to pay attention, I don't want to listen, I don't want to watch, I don't want to participate, because governments engage in this kind of silliness."

It is, indeed, silly. There is not much in this bill that is going to do anything positive in terms of addressing the very serious problem of illegal cigarettes, illegal tobacco and all the health consequences that flow from that, and frankly some of the crime consequences that flow from



that. There's very little in this bill that is going to do anything about that.

But this kind of legislative exercise leads to unbelievable public cynicism, because, believe it or not, you can't treat voters and the public as if they're stupid. They see this stuff, and they know what it's about. They know it's just window dressing and completely superficial, and it's not going to do anything, and that very much leads to public cynicism.

So I think this time allocation order is wrong on so many counts and wrong because of the public cynicism that it leads to.

There's another problem with this bill, and it's a serious problem, and I suspect that's another reason why we're seeing the time allocation order. One of the serious issues in terms of the distribution of cigarettes in the province involves the provincial government having to sit down and work with First Nations, having to listen to the concerns and the issues of First Nation communities and having to respond to those issues and concerns.

Did the government, before it presented this bill, sit down and discuss and negotiate and consult with First Nations? Is there any track record indicating that the government, with integrity, with thoughtfulness beforehand, sat down with the great number of First Nations in this province who, in one way or another, may have stores or may have operations that are involved in the sale of cigarettes? The track record indicates that no such communications happened.

I know what this is going to lead to in terms of First Nations. First Nations are going to be pretty angry; they're going to be pretty upset. They're especially going to be very upset when they hear cabinet ministers from this government going from one end of the province to the other talking about, over and over again, the very special relationship that this government has with First Nations. I've heard this speech so many times. I've heard the announcements repeated over and over and over, ad nauseam, so many times. First Nations see this: an exercise of disrespect, an exercise of, "We don't care what you have to say. We don't even care to come and talk to you," and then the government wonders why First Nations get upset and become angry with this government and become cynical about this.

I expect another reason why we're seeing the time allocation order is that the government would like to just usher this through and hope that it gets as little public attention, as little time on the public radar screen, as possible, because, frankly, the process, the mechanism, whereby this legislation was brought before the Legislature is itself a complete embarrassment.

As somebody who has a significant number of First Nations in my constituency, I can say that First Nations are getting used to this. They saw the Far North Act, which has huge implications for First Nations—with no consultation. In fact, what they saw was even worse. They saw the Minister of Natural Resources fly into some remote First Nations, hold a 10-minute photo op, get back on the plane and fly out, and then come to the

Toronto media and say, "We held extensive consultations with First Nation communities." And that was done not once, not twice, but probably about eight times. We saw First Nations up here in the galleries, day after day after day, protesting that piece of legislation. We saw them on the front lawn of the Legislature and we saw them behind the building, again making the same point: that this government that claims to have this very special, this very amiable, this very respectful relationship with First Nations had done nothing of the sort. They, again, were really, really upset.

Most recently, we saw the government's proposed—because it still hasn't been passed yet—forest tenure legislation on forest tenure reform. I was amazed to get a long letter from Mr. Harry Bombay, the executive director of the First Nations forestry association for Canada, protesting that this government has presented this legislation without ever talking to First Nation communities, many of them involved in forestry operations of one kind or another, or many of them First Nations still living on the land, who have an aboriginal interest, if not a treaty interest, in what happens to the forests. The government presents the legislation without ever having engaged in any discussion whatsoever with those First Nations.

#### 1410

Now we have this legislation. I think First Nation communities across Ontario must be getting the message right now from this government. What this government means by a "special relationship" is that the government can just ignore you, as they have done over and over and over again, over the last two or three years. But that is, I suspect, why we're seeing this legislation get time allocation: The government itself is embarrassed by the terrible process that was used to develop this legislation and bring it before the House without any consultation or discussion with First Nations who may or likely will be affected by the legislation—a terrible way to make laws. If you want people to lose respect for the law, if you want people to say, "That law isn't worth the paper it's printed on," then this is the way to do it. This is indeed the way to do it, because that is the end result of what you get from this kangaroo-court process that this government is engaged in with respect to this bill and which this government is engaging in in terms of using time allocation for the bill.

I just want to take a few minutes to talk a bit about the substance of the issue. The substance has some remarkable aspects to it. I remember—it was probably three years ago—that the government was patting itself on the back, saying, "Look: We've dramatically reduced smoking in the province, and we've dramatically reduced the consumption and sale of cigarettes in the province." If all you did was to go around to the corner stores and look at the cigarettes that they purchase from wholesalers and that they sell, and then look at the tax revenue, you could come to the conclusion that smoking has declined and the sale of cigarettes has declined. The government was promoting this and promoting this and promoting this.

However, some of the groups who actually do care about the integrity of the issue and do care about how



valid the statistics are on whether smoking is increasing, levelling off or declining finally took the government to task, saying, "Look: It doesn't paint an honest picture if all you're doing is looking at the sale of tobacco products from wholesalers to stores and then stores to the public, because that statistic ignores this huge sale of illegal tobacco products." It ignores the tobacco products that come in from the United States, and we know that—look, some of the big tobacco companies were engaged in that process, and we know that now. Some of the big tobacco companies were literally producing cigarettes in Canada, shipping them across the border and then finding ways to get them back into Canada illegally and sell them illegally. We know that was happening, and I know it because I've had chiefs of First Nations in my constituency come to me and say, "We're a bit worried about the sale of illegal tobacco products in our community. We'd like to see something done to better regulate this." We know it's happening.

Those people who really care about the integrity of the health statistics in terms of smoking know that it is a very, very serious problem. This is not 5% of the market; this is not 10% of the market; this is not 15% of the market. This is a lot more than that, such that the figures that the government was putting out in their claim to say that smoking was declining and consumption of cigarettes was declining are bogus. They don't have any integrity to them. So this is a big problem.

I've heard some of my Conservative colleagues talk. It's especially a big problem in terms of students. Yes, you do see black market cigarettes, illegal cigarettes being marketed near high schools and near elementary schools. Yes, you see it in other forums as well, a well-organized program of selling cigarettes in this fashion. It's out there, and anyone who wants to doubt it I think is clearly engaged in the game the government has been engaged in of closing their eyes and trying to ignore it.

This is a serious health problem, it is a serious problem in terms of organized crime, and it is a serious problem in terms of when governments pass legislation and then say that this is the law but just about everybody can see that the law is either being ignored or flouted. It is a very serious problem in terms of just public respect for the law and public order as well when this happens.

When you deal with legislation like this, the question you have to ask yourself is, is this legislation going to do anything about that? Is it going to do anything to make a substantive difference? And the fact of the matter is, when you actually look at the terms of the legislation, it's not going to do much at all. I am almost tempted to say that the legislation and the time allocation order together are a completely bogus exercise, that it's a waste of time of the Legislature and it's a waste of time of the public of Ontario that the government is going to try to create an impression that something is actually going to be done here, because nothing is going to be done here.

This is what I call "show" legislation. You show it just before the election. You announce it and give it a fancy title, but it's not going to do much. And all of this, this

kind of exercise and just about every part of it that we've seen so far, really does lead to a decline in public respect for this institution, public respect for the law, and a lack of public respect for the kinds of promotional campaigns that one often sees from governments from time to time: "We're going to really do something about this issue." I think what comes out of this is—unfortunately, on the part of the public, the end result is cynicism, that not much of anything is going to be done.

Will people vote for this legislation? They'll vote for it. I'm sure people will vote for it. I'm sure it will pass the House. But again, the question is, is it going to do anything substantive? Is it going to actually ameliorate the serious situation that we find out there? No, it's not.

Is it going to be workable in terms of First Nations? I don't think so. I think potentially it's going to create a whole lot of headaches with a number of First Nation communities across this province.

Is it going to do anything effective in terms of the peddling of illegal cigarettes in front of our schools, our high schools? I don't think so. I don't think so at all, but the legislation will pass because the government will say, "This is serious legislation to do something about illegal tobacco." So people will vote for it, it will pass, but not much of substance will happen here, and that is sad. That is sad because I believe, for example, in terms of First Nations, the will exists and the desire exists to sit down and have a serious discussion about tobacco and illegal cigarettes and their distribution, and to do something about that. I think the will exists in First Nations to do something about that.

I think that the public will exists. My God, there's been enough information on the health damage that cigarettes do, not only to the people who smoke but to the people who happen to be in the vicinity of smokers. I think there's goodwill on the part of the public to do something. I think those groups who have lobbied and worked very hard in terms of cigarette smoking and in terms of tobacco products and trying to promote anti-smoking campaigns and different techniques of quitting smoking—I think there's goodwill on the part of those people to do something. But I don't think this legislation is going to meet any of the requirements, any of the tests of any of those people. And that's sad; that is really sad.

1420

I think it's sad from a law enforcement perspective. As anyone knows, if the law of the land says X, Y and Z are not permitted, but people continue to see X, Y and Z happening—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** On a point of order: I don't believe there's a quorum present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is there a quorum present?

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is now present, Speaker.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I think this illustrates my point: Even government members don't take this legislation seriously. The government can't keep a quorum of members in the House.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Speaker, I'm here to debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm here to debate. It is a shame that the government can't keep a quorum in the Legislature for their own legislation. As I say again, it indicates the lack of seriousness that government members have for their own legislation in this instance.

But as I was saying, one of the issues that I think lawmakers have to confront is the scenario where you create, when you pass legislation that says X, Y and Z is not permitted, but then the public sees that X, Y and Z continue to happen—and not only do X, Y and Z continue to happen, X, Y and Z flourish. When governments create that kind of scenario, they are doing something which, in my view, is to the detriment of all of us. If government passes legislation that says X, Y and Z is not permitted, then government has the responsibility, in my view, to put the resources and the capacity behind the legislation to ensure that it is implemented and enforced. What we've seen repeatedly from this government on this issue are lots of statements and lots of pronouncements, just as we see in this legislation, but not much in the way of effective action. Once again, this leads to a very, very high level of political cynicism.

So I wish the government would take the bill back, take back its time allocation order, and actually sit down with First Nations and do some of the legwork that needs to be done on this issue; sit down with representatives of corner stores, who can also tell us about some of the legwork that needs to be done if this kind of legislation is going to be effective; sit down with those people who are charged with enforcing the laws to ask them what needs to be in the legislation in order to make it effective. And then take what has been recommended and do another round of consultation with all of those people who stand to be affected or who have an interest, and then bring the legislation to the House. But bring it to the Legislature and let's have some meaningful debate and meaningful discussion, rather than simply tabling the legislation, using the minimum debate time and then using time allocation to ram it through the House.

That would be really meaningful legislative work, and it would be meaningful legislative work that would probably lead to a public that is more supportive and a public that is less cynical. The government might even be able to trust their numbers the next time they announce that smoking has declined or the sale of cigarettes has declined or the consumption of tobacco products has declined. They might even be able to trust their own numbers then, and the public might be able to trust the numbers.

I would hope that the government would take the legislation back, recognize how flawed it is, recognize that it's not going to do much in a substantive way to tackle the problem that it's supposed to tackle and recognize that it's going to lead to even more public cynicism, because it is so badly drafted and it is so ineffectual in what it proposes to do. Let's do it right. That's what we should be doing and that's why New Democrats will vote against this time allocation order, because frankly it does nothing positive and it will have, in our view, a lot of negative consequences.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the time to address this time allocation order on Bill 186, the tobacco legislation. I just want to talk a little bit about why, when here we are in the dying days of the McGuinty government—this is an 11th-hour introduction of legislation. If you look over the last eight years of any initiative or lack of initiative or lack of action from this government, there seems to be some evidence that the McGuinty war on tobacco is failing. It's somewhat of a phony war.

At present, we're debating a time allocation bill with respect to a revenue bill with respect to smoking. The revenue minister brought in the legislation to deal with smoking, not the health minister, not the health promotion minister, so it's a bit of a phony war. I guess it's a catchy phrase with the media to say, "We're going to declare war on the economic activity, the social activity, the behavioural activity of using tobacco," primarily in the form of cigarettes; less so, snuff or chewing tobacco or cigars. Much of the impetus has been to strip the activity of previously held traditional rights.

It looks like this government has lost interest in smoking and health. Maybe the polling indicates that there are no votes in this area. Just a few minutes ago, the government was guilty of not even having a quorum in the House. That's a very clear measure—it's recorded in Hansard—of the lack of interest. There may be one member at the back who was sitting here enraptured with the last presentation—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I've been sitting here the whole time.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Oh, here's another member—two members who couldn't get their fellow MPPs to tough it out and, at minimum, meet a quorum, given the number of seats you hold.

The issue of smoking has gone a long way, in part thanks to some well-funded zealots, people with more commitment to this than the government members. They feel that no matter what public policy is imposed or what accomplishments are made, it's never enough. We remember the days of no smoking in government buildings, no smoking in workplaces, no smoking on airplanes. That was granted. Then the Ontario Liberals created a smoke-free Ontario; I think that was back in May 2006.

Again, since 2006, there have been presentations made to the McGuinty government by people like Michael



Perley and Garfield Mahood, I am sure, who continue to push forward. I've seen very little action on that front.

1430

Premier McGuinty, the health minister and the rest of the Liberal caucus have led us to believe that smoke-free legislation will curb smoking, keep people out of harm from second-hand smoke and, ultimately, save lives. If this is the case, I question why the smoke-free legislation back then really didn't provide any incentives or funding of any significance at all for smoking-cessation programs, let alone compensation programs, for example, for tobacco growers who were forced into bankruptcy.

We know that several years ago the federal government came through with something like \$300 million for compensation for farmers who had been put out of business. This was not the case with the McGuinty government. Within the same day, they announced—it was an agricultural funding program—that they would not harmonize with the federal government. There was no 60-40 share on that particular program, and now we're left with a situation that, gosh, this is three or four budgets later and it's pretty hard to go back to budgets of past years to rectify some of these wrongs.

The truth of the matter is that the provincial and federal governments don't want Canada's six million smokers to quit overnight—that's not happening anyway—because of the money that still accrues from the legal trade. I'm not sure, but perhaps across Canada, with the provinces, there's something like \$8 billion a year. You'll never hear talk by a government member opposite about making tobacco illegal.

We see a bill today. It's a revenue bill. This particular government is addicted to that source of revenue from an addictive substance, tobacco. Here's the kicker: Even if all of Canada's tobacco farmers were forced out of the fields, the hands of state would continue to be greased. Instead of collecting taxes from Ontario-grown product that has been grown by Ontario farmers for well over 80 years, now they can collect them from offshore import sales, both legal and illegal, coming from countries like China, India and Brazil.

Nobody argues that smoking tobacco is good for you, and with the growing incidence of government interference in a somewhat superficial way while ignoring the gigantic elephant in the room—the presence of contraband, the presence of illegal tobacco that, under the McGuinty government, has grown upward of something like 50% of the market now, and nobody's measuring—you're not going to get a government employee willing to sit in a tobacco manufacturing facility in a native community, for example. Government workers don't do that. They're not trained to do that. They don't understand the business. They don't understand the tobacco manufacturing business, let alone the processing business, let alone the retailing business, let alone the agricultural side of it.

Here's a quote from the Sunday Sun, October 31, 2004—Linda Williamson stirred up some interest, referring to the McGuinty government: "We have a strange conception of individual rights and public health. Raw

fish, cigarettes and pit bulls are too risky for Ontarians, but you can sleep on freezing sidewalks and suck back cooking sherry for as long as you please...."

Most parents understand the rebellion, the resentment that can result when you attempt to force children to do something. As adults, we're really no different. When price is involved and you continually jack up taxes as this government has been wont to do over the last eight years, you have now created a situation where the legal trade, which pays taxes on a very highly taxed item, is in no way coming close to being able to compete with the illegal trade. Government has proven that they cannot compete with the illegal trade; police forces have not been given the resources to compete with the illegal trade. As a result, McGuinty's Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions anywhere in the world that has lost control of the tobacco market.

If their aim was less smoking, we do see failure. It's difficult to quit as it is, in a controlled market, as we see in so much of the rest of the world. When close to half the tobacco is illegal, when young people are not asked to show ID when they pick up cigarettes to put on their handlebars to take into their elementary school—they're not asked how old they are. Any modicum of force that has been applied through policing obviously hasn't worked; if anything, it has exacerbated the problem. I guess we're just kind of scratching the surface over the last eight years, treating some of the symptoms and continuing to go through the motions and get the odd headline here and there.

There's a distinction between control and abolition. This government won't abolish tobacco. The legislation that we're debating sets the bar very low. Even in the title, it talks about reducing. It doesn't talk about eliminating something that virtually did not exist when these people were elected eight years ago. Why would legislation be brought in to reduce something that's illegal, something that virtually did not exist before? Why would they do that?

Again, I don't know what's going on behind the scenes. We know that there is a very significant criminal element involved in this business, an element that no employed politicians—there are some things that are going to have to be found out about this business, because we're dealing with organized crime. We're dealing with some very, very significant players.

I think of Six Nations in my area. I know the member for Brant has 200 smoke shacks in his riding alone. That's one Liberal riding, 200 smoke shacks. That's a disaster. Six Nations' council, just to try and peck away—they have difficulty, just like McGuinty, getting rid of smoke shacks. They have difficulty with minors working in these smoke shacks. They have a policy department. They don't know what to do to stop minors from working in tobacco retailing. This was before council quite recently—I'm quoting from the Turtle Island News, where concerns were brought forward. They've been working on some options. They're probably not getting any help from the McGuinty govern-



ment. I don't think a McGuinty government member or bureaucrat would wade into the Six Nations tobacco boondoggle—like I say, 200 smoke shacks; I don't know, maybe 20, maybe 30 manufacturing operations, something this government turns a blind eye to.

They've presented some options, trying to work with the school system, trying to provide bigger incentives than the money—the money that's there because of the McGuinty government—that lures children out of school so they sit in a smoke shack all day, selling illegal cigarettes. They're not sure they can do anything under the Indian Act, if the council has authority to pass this kind of legislation.

A third option: They could legally establish licensing requirements through a licensing provision, to allow youth to work in these establishments that sell tobacco. Licensing: Again, how do you enforce it? How would you enforce that on something like Six Nations? I really regret the fact that this government has let these people out to dry.

I think my colleague Mr. Hillier would like to speak a bit to this motion, Speaker, and I will defer to the honourable member down the way.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

1440

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to engage in this debate. It's unfortunate that the Liberals have not engaged in debate on their own bill, but they do have a quorum here now.

The member from Kenora—Rainy River said the government was engaging in silliness. I think he's being a little bit polite in saying that. This bill is really a pretext. This bill does absolutely nothing for the real and true problems with illegal and contraband tobacco in this province, but goes after the person who may have a few illegal cigarettes in their possession.

In my riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, in the county of Lanark—there are no native reserves in Lanark county. However, there are at least two smoke shacks in Lanark county, one just outside of Perth, on Highway 43, and another one just outside of Silver Lake Provincial Park, on Highway 7. When I drive to Toronto, down number 7, I pass another illegal cigarette shop in the Minister of Education's riding. These are smoke shops that are not on native reserves, and this government does absolutely nothing against those smoke shops.

I'll relay a little story. I remember once—a gentleman owns a small service station and sold cigarettes. I dropped in to see him one day and he said, "I just got visited by the tobacco enforcement police from the province"—to see if he was complying with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which of course he was. It was the 10th inspection that that little service station had endured in the past few weeks. He was really outraged, and he said to these enforcement officers, "Why aren't you going down the road to Silver Lake, to the native smoke shop on Highway 7?" And they said to this fellow, "Well,

we've been told not to go there." That's why this bill is a pretext. It's not going to actually do anything. This government is still going to be fearful of policing illegal smoke shops, but now bring the hammer down on somebody who has a couple of cigarettes.

This government ought to know—it does know—that the reasons why we have this problem are because of high taxation, which has created a profitable market, profitable for the black market and for organized crime to be engaged in this activity, and also their unwillingness to enforce the laws of the land today when it comes to native smoke shops. That's why we have this problem. This bill fails to address those problems. We're still going to have high taxation, which creates that black market, and this unwillingness to go after the illegal smoke shops.

I'd like the government to tell this House why you are not going after the smoke shops on Highway 7 and why you are not going after the smoke shops on Highway 43. Why are you going after the fellow who has a few cigarettes while you leave the whole festering problem untouched? That's what you're doing: leaving it untouched. You have no interest in actually eliminating contraband tobacco. It's now approaching 50% of all the cigarette sales in this province, and this government still does nothing. It's not silliness; it's a pretext.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Smith—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Hey, whoa. That's why I'm standing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Well, there's a different way to say it than just "whoa." I take it the member for Timmins—James Bay would like to speak.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for the "Hey, whoa."

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** No, that's all right. I'm just fooling around. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I just apologize for how I got your attention. I was just coming around the corner when I was looking at where we're at. I've got about 10, 15 minutes to get on the record in regard to some of this, and I just wanted to take the opportunity.

It's pretty clear that the government is becoming more and more engaged in the whole exercise of time allocation. It bothers me, and I think it bothers most members in the House, especially at a time when the opposition is not being very oppositional. You will note that with most of the bills that have come through the House, there has been fairly good agreement among the House leaders in order to deal and come to terms with—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Because it's good government, eh, Gilles?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, if it's good government, Minister of Education, why are we time-allocating, I guess is my—



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Transportation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, sorry. Transportation. What did I say?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Education.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I can't get over it, because you were—you know I always had. Okay, there we go.

Anyway, I just want the members of the House to understand that I think a lot of us increasingly are getting a little more apprehensive and extremely unhappy with the use of time allocation in this place.

When I first came to the Legislature back in 1990, time allocation was something that was used very, very seldom. In the past, when I first got here, there were bills that came before the House that had no limit on speeches. You were able to speak an entire afternoon if you wanted to. There was no limit on how long you were going to speak, just the limit that you could only speak once. Even in that particular system, you didn't have time allocation as you have today. In that system, you had a certain understanding among the parties that there were particular members of the House who may have an interest in a particular bill.

For example, if a bill came up that was on education, certain members who were predisposed and very interested in the issue of education would get up and speak probably more than some others and, yes, would take the floor for longer periods of time. But it was in order to express their thoughts on a particular issue and try, at second reading, to get the government and the rest of the members of the assembly thinking about what that member was interested in doing once the bill got to committee.

I've got to say that time allocation was something that was very seldom done. Over the years, every government has had a hand in changing the standing orders around this place to where we are today, where time allocation is almost an automatic issue in this House: a debate for seven and a half hours and automatically you go into time allocation. I guess I would make the following point: Is that necessary?

First of all, there has been very little in the way of hard opposition on the part of the opposition parties, either the New Democrats or the Conservatives, on many of the bills that are before us, because in many cases we actually agree with the bill but there are some issues. For example, on this particular bill having to do with the issue of contraband tobacco sales, I think nobody in the House is opposed to the general idea. However, there are some parts of the bill that need to be discussed and amended in committee, and I raised those issues during my time in debate last week.

But here we are, on a bill that most people agree with, and the government comes to time allocation. My guess is that this particular bill was probably going to end in less time than it would take us to time-allocate. So you say to yourself, "Why is it that the government chooses to do time allocation a whole bunch of times when they really don't have to?"

I think it has become what I and others talk about in this place: The House is becoming less and less able to

control debate in this place, compared to the power of the Premier and the unelected staff who work for the Premier, when it comes to what goes through this House. I think that is wrong for a couple of reasons. One, who woke up and made the Premier God? I don't care if it's Dalton McGuinty or anybody else; he's just another elected official who happens to be the head of the government. Yes, he's the Premier of Ontario and, yes, he should have a say. But that say should always be tempered by what the public has to say and what the representatives of the people have to say in this place.

So you see a legislative agenda come before the House, and there's a decision made even before we come into the House: We have so many hours for debate, and we are going to get so much business done so that we can say we've done all these wonderful things. They manage the time at the beginning of the session in such a way that they know how much they can get through by use of time allocation. I think that's too bad. I think that's rather sad, because what ends up happening is that we don't end up making the kinds of changes to legislation that need to be made in order to make it work.

I was at the association of police boards in Niagara on the weekend, along with Mr. Zimmer and Mr. Garfield—I forget the riding names; I apologize for that, Mr. Speaker—and one of the issues that came up was how legislation is drafted in this House. Quite often, it is faulty because of the process we go through in this House. We don't give it proper time for debate in the House, and more importantly, we don't give it proper time in committee. This is something we as New Democrats have been looking at under the leadership of Andrea Horwath: How as a government do you ensure that, yes, the government has the ability to pass its agenda? Clearly, in an election the governing party, the party that wins the most seats, has been given a mandate to pass their agenda and that agenda should be allowed to happen. If it's the case of a majority government, they should have the right to do so. But how do you temper that with the ability of making sure that you have proper review of the legislation so that you can actually make the legislation do what it was intended to do in the first place?

1450

There lies the problem when you have short debates, when you have debates like this. I would argue that this particular bill probably was going to end in another day of debate, two at the max. Then allow it to go to committee and to do the work that has to be done on committee. I think we could have ended up with a much, much better process at the end—not only process but, more importantly, a much better product in the end. So I say to the government across the way, time allocation is not necessarily the best of ideas.

The other thing, and I've spoken to this before, is the need to figure out how we make our committees work. Again, when we draft legislation, whether it be a private member's bill by an individual member or a bill by a minister through the government, I think that the com-



mittees should play a more important role than they do today. We should allow bills to go into committee, and not just for the two or three days that we see now. This particular bill in regard to the contraband tobacco act is going to go into committee for one day and come back out again. That hardly gives an opportunity for the public to think about what we're trying to do here, to give it some rational thought and then to give presentations to the committee so that we can make sure that we look at, does this work in the end? Does it achieve what you want to achieve? Is it doing it in the right way? Is there a balance to what's going on? If you don't allow bills to go into committee for a proper amount of time, I believe that's where you end up.

Again, when I first got here in 1990, the practice in this place was that if a bill was introduced in the fall, there was a lengthy second reading debate if it was a controversial bill. If it wasn't a controversial bill, you probably had, you know, somewhere around three or four debates on the particular bill. But here's the point: It went to committee and it didn't come back until the next spring.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Weeks of hearings.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yeah, it used to go for weeks of hearings, as my good friend Mr. Arnott said. He's from Wellington-Halton Hills.

The bill would go into committee, it would be there for weeks and it would travel across the province. I think that was a good thing because it forced members to listen to what people had to say and to try to amend bills in such a way that the legislation reflected what we heard.

Traditionally, what happened when I first got here was that the bill would come into the House in the fall. There would be a moderate to lengthy debate, depending on the controversy of the bill. The bill would eventually pass second reading. If the government had a controversial bill, they made sure to introduce it at the beginning of the fall session so that it could be done by the end of the fall session. Then in the intersession it would go out to committee, and sometimes it would even go back out to committee in the following intersession, in the summer, if the bill really needed it.

I was in on some bills around changes to the Planning Act, which is a very complex piece of legislation that has all kinds of ramification for people as that goes through, as well as the sustainable forestry development act. That went into committee and was in committee for a fairly long period of time before it eventually came back for third reading debate. But the point was, the committee was charged with looking at the bill and trying to amend the bill in such a way that it was strengthened.

I remember those particular bills, the Planning Act and the sustainable forestry development act. There were meaningful discussions at committee on the part of the public and committee members from all parties. There was meaningful dialogue on clause-by-clause because you didn't time-allocate the clause-by-clause; you actually had a discussion. The varying points of view were listened to and the committee tried to come to terms with what

was going to be workable in the end. The legislation that would come back before us for third reading had been pretty well thought through, pretty well vetted and fairly well amended so that it ended up doing what it should do.

Was the system perfect? Absolutely not. I'm sure members of this House can get up and talk about a particular bill at some time in the past that may not have been as good as it had to, but the point was, people had an opportunity to participate and, more importantly, the legislators had an opportunity to do their jobs.

I think where we're at now is, the government brings these bills into the House, we spend seven and a half hours of debate and, boom, it's out for time allocation when it doesn't really need to be. I just wanted to take the time in order to ensure that, in the end, the government heard that, because they're getting more into the habit of time-allocating.

We know that there's going to be a general election come October 6. Whoever the government is after October 6, this is advice that we need to listen to, if it's New Democrat, if it's Conservative or, God forbid, it's Liberal—and I say that wide openly because I come from a part of the province, my friends, where it's not a very good thing to be Liberal. But the point is that I hope that the next government is going to look at how we're able to strengthen the role of committees so that members are able to do their legislative duties in this place in a way that gives good critique to bills so that we can actually get better bills at the end of the day.

I hope that we don't end up time-allocating everything. Yes, I understand that if there's a majority government come October 6, the government is going to have the right to pass their agenda. I understand that. But there needs to be, also, an ability for the opposition to play its role. Our role is to look at bills, to critique them and try to find ways to make those bills work. If we followed that process, we'd be better off.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I think your time is up. Is it not?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All right. Just wait until we get the clock up.

The member for Nipissing-Pembroke.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There is no time. There we go. We've established that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You gave me hope, Speaker, and you snatched it away from me.

Perhaps on a point of order?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** On a point of order: The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to seek unanimous consent to allow us to use the government's time because they don't seem to want to speak to their own motion.

*Interjections.*



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I heard a no already.

Ms. Smith has moved government order number 75. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have been handed a deferral slip in proper order. This vote will be deferred until after question period tomorrow afternoon.

*Vote deferred.*

## TAXATION

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario families and help our economy remain strong, Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, as reaffirmed in the 2011 budget, removes 90,000 Ontarians from the income tax rolls, provides 93% of Ontarians with a permanent personal income tax cut, maintains the harmonized sales tax at the current rate and provides \$12 billion in tax relief for families and \$4.8 billion in tax relief for businesses; and

Recognizes that with Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, the economy is turning the corner by creating more than 293,000 new jobs since the global recession; and

Rejects the introduction of a carbon tax as a measure that would hurt Ontario's economic growth; and

Rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians the most, take \$3 billion out of health care and education funding and harm Ontario's economic recovery.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 74. Further debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure today to join in the debate on motion 74, reaffirming Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, making life easier for Ontario families and helping our economy remain strong.

When the Minister of Finance tabled Ontario's budget in March, he pointed to the many positive signs in the economy. Jobs and growth are both coming back; the economy is improving. We've made strategic investments in education, strategic investments in health care, and we have been able to lay the foundation for a future that shows increased productivity and, of course, a future that shows a better quality of life for all of the people in Ontario.

1500

It's true: Ontario is turning the corner to a better tomorrow. Our government has a realistic plan, an achievable plan, and a plan that will secure the prov-

ince's long-term financial sustainability. We are determined to protect the front-line services for the people of Ontario. We believe that a strong economy that creates and protects jobs is essential to fulfilling that commitment.

Our Open Ontario plan to make the province more competitive is working. Our economy is getting stronger every day. Our government is continuing to focus on a number of key areas that are helping to strengthen the economy every day. Those key areas include eliminating the deficit; reforming the delivery of public services, protecting the gains that we've already made in our educational and health care systems; and, of course, continuing to make life a little bit easier every day for the people of Ontario and for Ontario families. The McGuinty government is supporting the province's economic recovery and ensuring the lasting prosperity of this province. We have reported six consecutive quarters of economic growth, and that is a sign of progress.

This province's greatest strength is its people. It's their talent, it's their drive and it's their relentless determination to succeed that makes Ontario so strong. We are committed to making Ontario even stronger and protecting the gains that we've made together.

Our government recognizes that our tax plan for jobs and growth is essential to making their lives easier for the people of Ontario. The measures announced in the 2011 Ontario budget reaffirm that very commitment. Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth is ensuring sustained economic growth and job creation by significantly improving Ontario's tax competitiveness. The plan is providing tax relief to Ontarians by about \$12 billion over three years. To further assist Ontario households, our government is providing about \$1.4 billion annually in additional assistance to low- to moderate-income people through the Ontario sales tax credit, through the Ontario energy and property tax credit and through the northern Ontario energy credit.

We're also combining the payment of these three refundable credits by creating the Ontario Trillium benefit. Starting in July 2012, we plan on delivering on the combined payments monthly, instead of quarterly, just to make it that much easier for low- to moderate-income families to manage their household budgets.

As the recent job numbers from Statistics Canada show, our tax plan for jobs and growth is helping to create good new jobs for our families. In April alone, Ontario's employment jumped by almost 55,000 new jobs, and the unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage points. We've now regained 114% of the jobs lost during the recession, and 95% of those are full-time. Jobs in Ontario are coming back at a faster rate than in other jurisdictions around the world.

The McGuinty government has also cut personal income taxes and introduced a wide variety of tax credit and benefits that put money right back into the pockets of the people of Ontario. We've introduced several tax cuts and other benefits, again, just to make life that much easier for the people of Ontario, and these include the



Ontario clean energy benefit. This is providing families, small businesses and farms 10% off of their electricity bills. The children's activity tax credit is giving families \$50 per child, or \$100 per child with a disability, each year.

The Ontario energy and property tax credit is giving seniors up to \$1,025 and non-seniors up to \$900 to help with household costs. The northern Ontario energy benefit is providing relief to eligible northerners of up to \$200 per family and \$130 per single person. The Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant is providing eligible senior homeowners with assistance with their property taxes of up to \$500 each year. The Ontario child benefit is helping over a million children, and that's by providing low- and middle-income families with up to \$1,300 each year.

The Ontario sales tax credit is a permanent \$260 credit for every low- and middle-income adult and child. Michael Oliphant from the Daily Bread Food Bank said that the sales tax credit was sensible and forward-looking "and could become an important long-term piece of the economic security puzzle for poor people in the future."

Furthermore, with the changes we've made, 93% of taxpayers are paying less income tax, and 90,000 low-income Ontarians are no longer paying personal income tax. In fact, the average family in Ontario is getting an income tax cut of \$355 this year and every year going forward.

Through all of these measures, our government continues to make life just that much easier for the people of Ontario. Of course this was confirmed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in its paper that it released called Not a Tax Grab After All. Andrew Mitchell stated that, after looking at the numbers, "The interests of the poor are relatively well protected...."

Our plan for the economy is all about giving Ontario families and businesses what they need to succeed. With the HST, the amount of tax on 83% of goods stayed the same, and consumers are benefiting from \$730 million in annual point-of-sale exemptions. The HST is also providing more than \$4.8 billion in business tax relief over three years to make Ontario a more attractive place for business to invest and to create jobs in this process.

With the HST we are creating a tax environment where businesses can thrive, where businesses can innovate and be competitive in the global economy while passing along savings to consumers through lower prices. A letter signed by 32 prominent economists and professors had this to say: "The HST will enhance competitiveness, encourage new investment and create jobs. It represents sound public policy."

Consumers are already benefiting from the effects of the pass-through of HST savings. By December 2010, an estimated two-thirds of business savings from the HST had already been passed on to consumers through lower prices. When the HST is fully phased in, it will also result in the removal of about \$4.5 billion a year in embedded taxes that are paid by businesses. Under our new tax plan, our local businesses are enjoying signifi-

cant savings. The typical Ontario restaurant is paying 67% less in provincial, corporate and sales taxes; a manufacturer is saving 89%; and a software publisher is saving 58%. This means that Ontario entrepreneurs and small businesses can increase their investments, can hire more employees and, of course, can continue to prosper.

#### 1510

The reduction in the tax burden on new business investment will also increase investment in Ontario by \$47 billion and create nearly 600,000 net new jobs by 2020.

Ian Howcroft, from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, emphasizes the ongoing benefits of our tax plan for the economy. Ian Howcroft had this to say: "The combination of tax measures including the corporate tax reductions and the HST will help drive economic growth and ultimately job creation in Ontario. These were bold initiatives at a time when such actions were desperately needed to avoid catastrophe." So we thank Ian for his comments. With all of these benefits for Ontario businesses and Ontario families, it's no wonder that our tax plan is supported by leading economists and business groups, as well as poverty activists and left-leaning policy research institutes alike.

Our motion that we are debating here today clearly states that the McGuinty government rejects an increase to the HST rate. Our motion also rejects a decrease to the HST.

Some members of the opposition have suggested we should reduce the HST by one percentage point and find other ways to reduce the deficit. This approach would require deep cuts to crucial public services and, of course, would benefit the wealthiest people in Ontario and, at the same time, harm Ontario's economy.

Others might choose to slash benefits for our low-income people, let our infrastructure age and allow our universities and colleges to fall into disrepair. In fact, a one-point cut in the HST is about the same as \$3 billion in provincial revenues each year. Those in opposition who would suggest cutting revenue by \$3 billion each year would mean that those in opposition would need to lay off teachers. They would need to reduce the number of doctors in Ontario. They would need to eliminate funding for nurses. We know from past experience that across-the-board cuts do not work.

I lived the Rae days. I walked the picket line under a Mike Harris government. History has shown that they've done it before, and they will do it again. We choose instead to protect jobs, to protect our vital public services and, of course, to protect our economic recovery.

Neither of the two opposition parties have committed to repealing the HST if elected. In fact, the Ontario PC Party supported tax harmonization until the day that it was introduced. In March 2009, the leader of the official opposition had this to say: "We understand how that (single sales tax) can help the economy." The very next month, he is quoted as saying, "I agree that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales taxes."



Furthermore, our tax reform was both supported and encouraged by the official opposition's federal cousins, including Jim Flaherty, John Baird and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. In fact, even John Tory has come out in support of the HST. This past February, John Tory had this to say: The HST is "good economic and tax policy if we want to create jobs in the province of Ontario ... it took some courage to do it."

As for the NDP, they say they oppose our tax plan, despite support from food banks and other poverty support groups. At least one member from the NDP caucus has admitted that people are better off under our new tax system. The member from Beaches–East York is recently quoted, and I quote directly what the member from Beaches–East York had to say: "The tax burden has gone down on everyone, in spite of what people think. You know, taxes have gone down, literally on all income groups."

If voters have any concerns about an increase to the HST, they should look no further than the NDP. This party still has a request in to the Premier asking to raise the sales tax by 1%. Despite campaigning on removing the HST from energy, the NDP government in Nova Scotia increased the HST in that province by two points. Furthermore, the NDP has said that we should raise the corporate income tax paid by local Ontario businesses.

Our motion also rejects the introduction of a carbon tax. Our government has been very clear: We do not support a carbon tax as it would harm our economy and put our recovery at risk. Any suggestions made by the official opposition otherwise are simply unfounded. Ultimately, they seem to be grasping at straws.

The official opposition wants to cut the clean energy industry in Ontario, putting thousands of people out of work and driving away new investment. The Conservatives want to stop full-day kindergarten in its tracks, creating a two-tiered school system. And they will cut \$3 billion to \$6 billion from health care and education to pay for a decrease to the HST.

Since 2003, our government has always chosen to preserve and safeguard the quality of life for the people of Ontario. The McGuinty government continues to improve the fundamentals: That's education, that's health care, that's our infrastructure, that's our electricity and lower taxes. Reliable public programs and new business opportunities continue to support a strong economy.

We've modernized Ontario's tax system. We've rebuilt Ontario's rundown electricity system. Who would forget the blackouts in the summer of 2003 just before we formed government with the neglect of the opposition to rebuild the electricity system and the education and health care systems? We've kick-started our clean energy sector and we've protected the automotive industry.

These are real results. They've put Ontario on a stronger competitive footing, and we continue to create more opportunities for Ontario families and businesses.

Our plan to help the people of Ontario through the recession and build a stronger future is working. Of course, that's why I urge all those today in attendance

and throughout this debate to agree to the motion reaffirming Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, making life easier for Ontario families and helping our economy remain strong.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** A pleasure to join this debate after a very successful blue blitz on Friday, where the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus and candidates travelled the province to talk about this government's plan to raise taxes yet again, if Ontarians are to give them another renewed mandate, which, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, after our travels in 60 different communities with our leader, Tim Hudak, and I believe 23 members of the Ontario PC caucus—and even more PC candidates, we're hearing—is not going to be the case. They will not be re-elected.

I want to start by reading a quote from Dalton McGuinty on April 4, 2011, from Hansard: "[A] very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past."

Now let's talk about Dalton McGuinty's record, because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds if Ontario re-elects Dalton McGuinty again. Before the 2003 election, Dalton McGuinty emphatically denied he would increase taxes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I am reminded that we are to be careful with using names. Offices, we can use. Please. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Premier McGuinty emphatically denied he would raise taxes. On September 11, 2003, prior to that year's election—and I know that my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will remember this—Premier McGuinty signed a pledge called the taxpayer protection promise. Let me read the pledge into the record. It read, "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: Not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the ... consent of Ontario voters...."

1520

We all remember those commercials, the ones he ran more than 200 times during the election. We all know that signing that pledge helped get Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government elected, and we all know what happened next. The minute he got the keys to the Premier's office from Ernie Eves, down the hall from this very chamber, Dalton McGuinty treated his word like it was nothing. His solemn promise to the people of Ontario meant nothing to him.

He brought in, at that time, the health tax. Of course, I wasn't a member of provincial Parliament at that time; John Baird, the current House leader in Parliament, was. At that time, he called Mr. McGuinty and his finance minister of the day a name I'm not able to say in this chamber, because it was the single largest tax grab in the history of Ontario, taking \$3 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario families in the name of health care when not a single penny of that tax goes into health care; it only goes into general revenue.



I have here, in my hands, a chart about how much the health tax costs Ontario families. Those people making \$21,000 a year are paying \$60 a year in health tax. From \$25,000 to \$36,000, people are paying \$300 a year. At \$36,500, people are paying \$330. The list goes on. People being paid between \$38,500 and \$48,000 are being forced to pay \$450 in a tax that is not going to health care. Those making \$48,100 are forced to pay \$475. Those being paid a salary of \$48,000 to \$72,000 are being forced to pay \$600, and those from \$72,000 to \$200,000 are being asked to pay \$750 to the government of Ontario for their sewer fund each year. Those making over \$200,600 a year are asked to pay \$900. Can you imagine what effect this cost has had on Ontario families who are working hard to play by the rules and are being forced to pay more and more but get less out of this government?

If it weren't bad enough from 2003 to 2007, in the 2007 election campaign, Mr. McGuinty did it again. Before the 2007 election, he promised that he would not lower taxes, but he wouldn't raise them either. I remember those ads. I was, at that point, already elected for a year and a half. I was going into my first re-election campaign, and I remember Dalton McGuinty looking at the television audience in his ads and saying, "I won't raise your taxes either." What did he do? He told his critics, "You're wrong." In fact, when told that his critics wouldn't believe him, he said, "They're wrong. They're wrong. They're wrong." But after that vote, and without warning, he broke his promise again and brought in the \$3-billion HST tax grab. The HST on hydro bills is one of the reasons those bills are increasing as we speak.

Let me talk a little bit about the items Mr. McGuinty brought in an 8% increase on—items that Ontario families are forced to pay on; thank you, Mr. McGuinty, for this tax grab. Dry cleaning services; cleaning services; heating and hydro; Internet access fees; home service calls by electricians, plumbers, carpenters; maintenance and repair to furnaces, leaky faucets, bathrooms, toilets, electrical wiring, etc.; landscaping; lawn care; and private snow removal: All have seen an 8% increase in the last year due to Dalton McGuinty's greedy \$3-billion HST tax grab.

Taxis, campsites and domestic air, rail and bus travel originating in Ontario have seen an increase. Magazines purchased by subscription thankfully hadn't seen changes but were about to go up, except that thankfully there were protests from that industry. Home renovations saw an 8% increase at the same time the federal government was telling Canadians it was okay to renovate their homes, and kick-started the economy by giving the home renovation tax credit. After that tax credit was gone, not only was it gone, but then this government raised that by 8%, making it that much more unaffordable for the people of Ontario to do home renovations, causing a few things, might I add. It caused people to go out of business, and it also caused some home renovators to go underground. Who knows how much revenue the government of Ontario has lost as a result of that?

We've seen, in recent days, the price of gasoline go up exorbitantly. It's been challenging. For the job that we do in this chamber, to travel around the province and our communities to do the job it has cost me four times this week to fill up my tank. Each and every time I go, I see a \$1.359 or \$1.279 or \$1.254, whatever the number is. This government is so greedy that not only is it taking a gas tax portion, it's now taking an extra 8% that it wasn't less than a year ago.

Real estate commissions, massage therapy services, vitamins, green fees for golf—all have seen an 8% increase as a result of this government's greedy, greedy initiatives to take more from the people who are working to pay their bills. Ballet, karate, trampoline, hockey, soccer lessons etc.—everything has seen an increase. Hockey rink and hall rentals have all gone up. Tickets for live theatre with less than 3,200 seats—that's impacting some of our smaller community theatres. Fitness trainers, hairstylists, barbers—and one other that has seen an 8% increase as a result of this greedy HST tax grab that Mr. Duncan, the finance minister, has brought in, is legal fees. And nicotine replacement products, hunting and fishing licences.

The reality is that things have gotten a lot more expensive since Premier McGuinty has taken office, and this government has decided that it would like to see 8% on 17% more of the items that we purchase. Nothing has gone down in Ontario as they've promised. In fact, things continue to increase. The two biggest ticket items I might add are heat/hydro and, of course, gasoline for our cars.

If bringing in this \$3-billion greedy HST tax grab on July 1, 2010, wasn't bad enough, on that very same day this Liberal government snuck through a very, very sneaky eco tax grab that Ontario families are forced to pay on 9,000 different household items. There are, as I said, 9,320 items that the McGuinty Liberals slapped eco taxes on. There were protests in the streets across Ontario, particularly in the city that I represent, the city of Ottawa, starting at the Premier's office itself. Hundreds of people showed up to protest Mr. McGuinty. In fact, I see the member from Ottawa West—Nepean is here. Hundreds showed up to protest him as well because they did not appreciate the secrecy with which this tax was brought in.

My colleagues and I are going to read every single item into the record through the course of this debate to remind Ontario families that the McGuinty Liberals are hard-wired to tax. I'll start by reading the items. This is the entire list; it could fill seven hours, I'm sure, of debate quite easily.

But just to give you an example: a handle of a hammer sledge that's 16 inches, a handle of a hammer sledge that's 36 inches, laser auto level with wall mount system, laser auto level, measuring units, sharpening kits, staple guns, staple gun kits, cutting pipe monarchs for oil, torch kits, butane, plumbers' torch kits, trigger torch kits, quick-fire oxygen cylinders, fuel cell refills, power cutters, tube cutters, digital inspection cameras, air tube lubricants, air compressor lubricants, air compressor oil,



drill kits, combination kits for tools—there's literally 9,000 here—rotary tools, screwdriver kits. These are everyday items. Soap is included, caulking, coating, adhesive, epoxy adhesive, laser cordless mouse, camcorders, mice for your computers, optical corded mice, cordless phones: These are literally the items that are covered by this greedy government. Even DVDs are covered by this, you'd be shocked to notice.

1530

**Bluetooth headsets:** The minute they told us we shouldn't be talking on our phones in cars, they decided to add an extra tax to Bluetooth headsets. Phones for desks, clock radios, AM-FM radios, LCD TVs, solar lights, solar fixtures, multi-digital meters, tester kits, electrical tools, circuits, cement solvents, lamps, air conditioners, bathroom cleaners, scrub-free soaps—you name it. There have been a whole host of items that this government has added to the list for those who have to pay an additional tax. This government loves to tax so much, it finds innovative and creative ways: not only how to tax but also what to tax.

What's extremely disappointing is that each and every day, we hear from Ontario families who are struggling. As I mentioned, on Friday the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus went to 60 different communities to talk to local community members as well as local members of the media about the various tax grabs this government has brought in place.

In fact, what he has brought in pales in comparison, we believe, to what he will bring in. As you well know, this is a government that has contemplated raising the HST. They opposed the federal government when they lowered the GST. It's also a government that has mused, openly and very publicly, about bringing in a carbon tax. Of course, the parliamentary assistant is going to suggest that that's not going to happen, but they did it before and they will do it again. They have promised several times in the past that they would not raise taxes. They ran ads to say that they would not add taxes or increase taxes, and what did they do? Promise made, promise broken. In 2007: promise made, promise broken.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I hear the transportation minister over there at this point in time, very upset at her government's record. I can tell you, there is change occurring right across Ontario. We've seen it in the city of Toronto, but we've also seen it in her own riding of Don Valley West, where John Carmichael was elected, because Ontarians know and Canadians know that the best way forward is through a Conservative tax relief plan that, in the last federal election, Prime Minister Harper had introduced and what we're going to bring forward in Ontario, through a Progressive Conservative tax relief plan, under our leader Tim Hudak.

But don't just take it from me. I do have some quotes here that I'd like to read into the record. For example, Dan Nall from Brampton writes: "Please do whatever you can to stop this Liberal government from getting re-elected before we are taxed to death."

Dan Nall is not the only person who has written to our caucus members and our leader to speak this way, because of course, as you know, enough is enough. People are tired of this tax, spend and wasteful government that has been re-elected based on the promise of not raising taxes. For example, Bruce Broderick wrote in a Guelph newspaper, "Complacent taxpayers are and will be paying more and more in taxes unless they take a proactive interest in the waste involved in Ontario government policies. I am a disgusted taxpayer."

I think Bruce Broderick's point echoes throughout Ontario, in our various communities, because people are constantly telling us that they're paying more and getting less. That's a common theme with this government.

E.J. Cober from North Lancaster agrees, and he writes, "As soon as Dalton McGuinty was elected Premier of Ontario, he broke all promises with stupid excuses." Speaker, those are E.J.'s words, not mine, but they are certainly shared by the people across Ontario who believe this government is on its last legs, because you cannot continue to tell people you're doing one thing and consistently, consistently, consistently do another and breach their trust.

Jim Murphy from Oakville—my colleague from Oakville may want to hear this—says, "What really concerns us is the continual upward creep of taxes, whether directly or through user fees and hidden taxation."

It doesn't end there. Here's an entire other list of things that cost more for Ontario families thanks to Premier McGuinty: the Toronto land transfer tax; the Toronto vehicle registration fees—and of course we're thankful that Mayor Rob Ford will give Toronto families some relief by getting rid of those, because everyone in this caucus understands that Rob Ford was able to get rid of the gravy train that most of the Ontario Liberal Party is still riding on. The hidden hydro tax is a new tax that Mr. McGuinty has brought in. Higher personal income tax; higher personal corporate tax; higher small business income tax rates; business capital tax; seniors' property rates; eye exams. This is another big one: Chiropractic services have been delisted, and they're more expensive for Ontario families to pay. Physiotherapy services have increased. Tire taxes, even though Mr. McGuinty once said, for example, he was opposed to them; BlackBerrys; iPods; Blu-ray DVD players; LCD TVs—all of those have seen an increase under Dalton McGuinty.

When people talk about our young people not getting out to vote, these are some real reasons why the next generation of voters should be concerned: because he's taxing them before they even start to make incomes. Many of these kids saving their weekly allowance to purchase these items are seeing them taxed beyond belief.

Commercial vehicle operators' registration has gone up. Civil court fees have gone up. Small Claims Court fees have gone up. Family Court fees have gone up. Add that to the fact that HST is now on legal fees and it is now becoming a very big issue for those who want proper legal representation, when you see these very real costs increase in the court system.



Fractional ownership of cottages—basically, pay twice; tobacco; beer; wine; spirits; destination marketing fees; camping unit fees. For those people who are planning to go and enjoy themselves on this May 24 weekend—a traditional beginning-of-the-summer camping trip—I will say it again: camping unit fees; destination marketing fees; beer; wine and spirits. The reality is, all of this has gone up, making this year's family vacation more unaffordable than ever before, particularly when you add in the increase in the price of gas and the take the government is making off of the HST. It is becoming harder to have a family vacation in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Also what has gone up are college and university student centre fees, college and university athletic facility fees, and college and university extended health plan fees. We didn't get the students enough. Mr. McGuinty also has increased the desktop computer fees, laptop fees, rear projection TVs and plasma TVs, CRT TVs—I don't even know what those are, but he has increased those as well.

Computer mice fees; computer keyboard fees; computer disk drive fees; computer personal monitor fees; personal hand-held computer fees; personal digital assistant, non-cell-enabled, fees—fax machine fees have gone up.

It seems like every single aspect of our life in Ontario is now being taxed by Premier McGuinty, and people have had enough. They're asking us, "Can we get to the vote any sooner so that we can throw this guy out?" And while I'm here to say I wish that were true, we cannot do that. We do have an election on October 6, when my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa and my colleague from Halton are going to not only be re-elected but they will be part of a Tim Hudak majority government, and we're going to get to the issue here of finding relief, broad-based relief for the people who pay the bills in this province.

If it weren't bad enough that I left it at fax machine fees, we are now paying computer flatbed scanner fees; typewriter fees; copier fees; scanner fees; pager fees; microphone fees; joystick fees; game pad fees; telephone fees; answering machine fees; digital camera fees; tape camera fees; disc camera fees; film camera fees.

1540

It doesn't end there: audiovisual equipment fees; modem fees; amplifier fees; tape audio player fees; disk audio player fees; digital audio player fees; tape audio recorder fees; disk audio recorder fees; digital audio recorder fees and equalizer fees; preamplifier fees; speaker fees; tuner fees and turntable fees. If you enjoy music in this province, Dalton McGuinty has found a way to tax you and take more of your hard-earned money while he is at it.

This is a Premier who has found a way to not only tax digital projector fees but also tape recorder fees, video recorder fees, disk recorder fees, digital recorder fees, desktop printer fees, desktop label printer fees, desktop barcode printer fees, desktop card printer fees, portable

PC-free photo printer fees, desktop fax machine fees, camera dock printer fees, desktop multi-function machine fees, floor-standing printer fees, point-of-sale receipt printer fees and handheld printer fees.

If there has ever been somebody who has opposed technology by putting so many taxes and fees on them, it's this government here. Premier McGuinty has found a way to make money off the people who pay the bills, who want to embrace technology, but he needs his cut.

You know what Dalton McGuinty has said after each one of these fees and taxes? I think he said, "Ka-ching." I'm surprised he hasn't put a fee on the cash register. Maybe they're obsolete now—I don't know—and Dalton McGuinty doesn't find a need to tax them and put a fee on them.

But I have to say, given his record as we started out here—I believe that his favourite quote is, "[A] very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." If you go through not only the eco tax, you go through the HST, and you go through not only the health premium or the health tax but through that other list of 40 or so other taxes and fees he has brought in, the question then becomes, "What is Mr. McGuinty's predictor of the future, given what has happened in the past?"

That's why, on Friday, members of the Ontario PC caucus joined our leader, Tim Hudak, to travel this province to inform Ontario families that, given Dalton McGuinty's past and his behaviour in the past, the best indication of what our future will be like is more taxes.

That's why, last week, we put forward—and I sponsored the motion—a motion calling on this Premier and his finance minister and all those Liberals across the way to reject future tax increases, but they stood in their place and, one by one, every single Liberal stood up and rejected the idea to reject tax increases.

The question I want to know is: Why? Why did they reject our motion calling for no new taxes or no increases in existing taxes? Why, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you why. I believe that they're trying to keep their options open to yet increase the HST by one or two points or bring in a carbon tax, as senior members of that government have previously been in support of. After they defeated our motion, the finance minister said on Wednesday that a Dalton McGuinty government would not raise or lower taxes. It's as if we've had déjà vu all over again.

I want to use Mr. McGuinty's quote that he said before he was elected: "[A] very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." So if they've twice before told us that they weren't going to raise taxes and then, after they were elected, they turned around and they did raise taxes, why should we believe them now, that they're not going to raise taxes? We simply can't. Not only do the people in this chamber not believe them; the public doesn't believe them. Taxpayers, the voters in this province, the Ontario families who are paying the bills, don't believe Mr. Duncan, nor do they believe Premier McGuinty, that they will not raise or increase or bring in new taxes. That ship has sailed.

Déjà vu: Yes, we've seen it, because it's exactly what Mr. McGuinty said in 2003. And now we see this motion



before us, and it doesn't really mean anything because, again, they're not going to follow it.

They broke taxpayer protection laws in this province. They've broken their word to taxpayers. Why should we believe them now? Why should we believe any of the rhetoric in this motion when we know they have lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario? We know, for example, that they've brought our economy from first to worst in economic growth. Our economic growth at one point—it may still be—was lower than the province of Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province.

For the first time since Confederation, Premier McGuinty and his Liberal Party have taken Ontario into the welfare system of Canada. We actually have to accept handout payments from our federal government for the first time in Canadian history.

It took every Premier before Mr. McGuinty to amass a debt of \$148 billion, and within seven and a half short years, do you know what Dalton McGuinty did? He doubled it. Every Premier before him could only amass a certain amount, but this guy knows how to tax, he knows how to spend, he knows how to waste money, because we are now in our third consecutive deficit in Ontario. It's the largest in Ontario's history. It started at \$28 billion, and it is now around \$18 billion. It's basically going nowhere fast. We are rivalling California and Greece in terms of our economic situation. And they're now promising that they're not going to raise our taxes. I don't think anyone believes them.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It means they're going up if they promise not to raise them.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It means they're going up, as my colleague from Halton is saying.

So we now have this motion. Instead of "government motion 74," government motion 74 should be renamed the "Liberals say they won't raise taxes, and they really, really, really, really, really mean it this time" motion. They really mean it this time. But nobody in town believes that they really mean anything anymore.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** They've got to promise not to break their promises.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** As my colleague from Halton says, they're promising not to break their promises this time.

But this latest promise by Premier McGuinty not to raise taxes, at the same time that he is more likely than ever to break his word—as I've already said, he is not going to run again after the next election. Then again, maybe this is why the finance minister moved the motion, because he'll be the next Liberal leader to break his word about raising taxes.

Aside from knowing that they're going to raise taxes—it's what they do—they have added an incentive this time. Dalton McGuinty, as I said, has led Ontario to an \$18-billion deficit. He has not tried in the last seven years to reduce or stop runaway spending. As I said earlier, Rob Ford came in with stopping the gravy train. These guys are still on it. So they're a couple of stops

past the stop sign that Rob Ford has put up. But thankfully, I believe that in October the voters of Ontario will send this gravy train out of business.

But you can say one thing for them. After that long list of eco fees, after that long list of taxes, hidden hydro fees and other fees that they brought in, there's one thing this Liberal government is: They are consistent. They are consistent at raising taxes, they are consistent at saying one thing and doing another, and they are consistent in trying to use the same strategy time and time again.

They've grown the debt. They're on track to double it. Our leader, Tim Hudak, likes to point out that it took 23 Premiers 136 years to accumulate, as my colleague from Halton said, Ontario's first \$148 billion of debt. These guys have learned in a very short time how to double that. The only way to pay for it, Speaker, is to raise your taxes, those of the families of these wonderful young pages in front of you, and those of the people who visit this chamber or, quite frankly, who send us here to debate on their behalf. They will have single-handedly doubled the debt in eight years in office.

1550

And now, before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty are making promises again, promises they either intend not to keep or promises they can't keep. They are making these promises again—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** If you want to talk about killing jobs, you should look at your own record. You've killed 300,000 manufacturing jobs. The record is there. You've done it to the people of this province, and they will never forgive you.

Let me read that quote again from Dalton McGuinty on April 4, 2011, from Hansard. I'll do a refresher for my colleague opposite. "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." That is why Ontario families don't want any more pledges or promises this time. They don't want them because they simply do not believe the Premier can keep his promises.

They want a guarantee, and when it comes to taxes there is only one guarantee Dalton McGuinty will give them: He will raise their taxes. He can't help it. It's what he always does.

An Ontario Progressive Conservative government will take a different approach. We will not raise people's taxes. An Ontario PC government will lower taxes across the board to finally give Ontario families the respect they deserve and the relief that they need.

The reality is, the front bench across the way—what they have not put into the debate today is the fact that when they raise people's taxes, that money is not exactly going to the best public services. In fact, what we're seeing is secret sweetheart deals at Samsung, \$7 billion—which is a larger contract, by the way, than the F-35s that the federal Department of National Defence is purchasing for Canadian soldiers overseas. A larger sole-source contract is the Samsung agreement.

We also have the \$1-billion eHealth—

*Interjections.*



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock for a second, please. Members, we are going to be here for a long time; let's have it be a good time. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm having a great time, Speaker.

The reality is, this is the government who wants to talk about nurses and doctors, yet decided to take \$1 billion and put it in the shredder at eHealth.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I hear the Minister of Health over there. She should be ashamed for what occurred under her government's watch. Precious health care dollars intended for those who require MRIs, who need cancer care, who deal with obstetrics—that money went down the tubes. It went through a shredder. That money is no more. That's \$1 billion—after telling Ontario families that they had to pay this \$3-billion health tax.

This is unacceptable. This is a government that has lost its way, or maybe they never even found their way to begin with. The reality is, they have taken money, they have wasted it, they have asked for more. They've looked at grandmothers, soccer moms, small business owners as a personal ATM of this government. People are now rejecting them, and they're telling us that time and time and time again.

They will never be forgiven for that \$1 billion of waste at eHealth. They will never be forgiven, for example, for that \$7-billion Samsung secret deal to a foreign multinational corporation which has increased people's hydro rates across this province. They won't be forgiven for things like purchasing cars and vacations with children's aid society money. They won't be forgiven for the \$500 million to \$1 billion in lost revenue each and every year as a result of their lax approach to contraband tobacco. And they won't be forgiven for promising, time and time again, not to raise people's taxes at election time and then turning around and increasing their taxes, their fees and other mechanisms by which the government raises money.

They're simply not believed anymore. As I stated earlier in this speech, my colleagues and I had an opportunity, through the blue blitz last Friday, to travel to 60 different communities across Ontario to hear from people who were tired of paying these exorbitant rates, fees and taxes only to get little or nothing from them.

I think of Jack Garner from Barrie, who says, "The biggest insult of all to we citizens has to be the additional 8% tax increase the provincial government is going to add on the debt retirement payments we now pay because of the former Ontario Hydro's \$38-billion debt. This is tax on tax on tax.... Oh, boy!"

That tax, that debt retirement charge should have been paid off; \$7.8 billion should have been paid off this year. This government has still the exact same amount of tax on those hydro bills—a tax on a tax on a tax. If they were so concerned about the price of hydro, they wouldn't have put the HST on the price of hydro, and they wouldn't have put the HST on the price of the stranded debt, that \$7.8 billion.

But this government speaks with one voice but clearly does another thing, and that's dishonest. But that is what they have done time and time and time again: They've said one thing, and they have done another.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member to withdraw that last comment.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you, Speaker. I just wish that they would tell the truth, but they are so opposed to the truth that it becomes difficult.

Doug Priest from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock says, "This province will be crippled if this unprecedented tax grab, cleverly disguised as the harmonized sales tax, comes into effect. It will mostly hurt retired people and people on ... fixed incomes."

Speaker, I know you. I know that in your community, you've heard the same concerns that I have heard from people telling you that their bills are becoming too high, that their income is not moving up. That has been creating a disparity with their pocketbooks.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The reality is, if you wanted to be responsible, you would start standing up for your constituents, but not one person over there is ready to do that. They only want to toe the party line to the detriment of the people that they represent here in this chamber who have sent them here with a solemn vow that they made in the last election not to raise their taxes. They turned their backs on their constituents, and instead they did just that. That's reality.

Listen to John Pucci, who works with Hockey Northwestern Ontario: "The minor hockey numbers in northwestern Ontario have declined for the last 10 seasons, due to the economy. And I think (the HST) is going to further complicate our recruitment of players in the minor hockey sector."

There's almost nothing more Canadian than playing hockey, and this government is trying to make it less affordable for families out there who are right now trying to make ends meet. Now this government has decided it will add an extra 8% to all things hockey.

Peter Coleman at the National Citizens Coalition said, "We ... believe this is a huge tax grab on consumers at a time when people are struggling to keep their jobs and have very little left over from their paycheque."

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** To the member who wants to heckle me and try to shut me down: When I was in his community over the weekend, we heard even from the journalists how tired they are of this McGuinty Liberal government. If I were any of them, I would actually go out into their communities to start talking to the people who have sent them here and actually to respect the people who have sent them here, because the people who have sent them here are telling the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, "Enough is enough. We cannot afford them anymore. We are paying more. We are getting less. We don't believe them anymore." A simple trip to the grocery store, to Walmart or to a soccer field

would do the trick for some of these members who have spent too much time in the bubble at Queen's Park and not enough time on Main Street.

Paul Bailey, president of the Police Pensioners Association of Ontario, says, "From a police perspective ... this is nothing but legalized theft."

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Let's read that one again for the member from Ottawa West-Nepean. Paul Bailey, president of the Police Pensioners Association of Ontario, said, "From a police perspective ... this is nothing but legalized theft."

"Nothing but legalized theft": That is how respected members of our community like the Police Pensioners Association of Ontario view their government. That's how they describe Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government: as legalizing theft. I'd say that's quite shocking.

1600

We have this motion before us that promises for the third time, after raising taxes about 85 times, that they're not going to raise taxes, and we're supposed to believe them. Many people now just roll their eyes at this Liberal government. They don't believe them. They don't believe for a second that this government wouldn't raise taxes if it were re-elected.

I repeat, for all the banter they have—"You're going to cut nurses; you're going to cut doctors"—no one believes them. They believe that they've wasted a billion dollars on eHealth, they believe that they've wasted \$7 billion with Samsung and they believe that they've wasted \$500 million to \$1 billion with their lax attitude toward contraband tobacco. They just don't think they're good money managers.

And we see that the proof is in the pudding. This is a government that has lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. This is a government that has forced Ontario families to take subsidized payments from the federal government through the equalization program. This is a government that has staggered the economic growth of what used to be the economic generator in this nation—from first to worst. This is a government that has doubled the debt. This is a government that has the largest deficit in Ontario's history. This is a government that won't take responsibility for one of its actions.

Three weeks from now, we will leave this place for the final time in this Parliament. We will go into our communities. Many of us will go door-knocking. Some won't be returning.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Just go in there and tell them the truth.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The reality is that if somebody wants to tell the truth, it should be the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. He's had an opportunity for the last eight years to tell the truth, and in fact his government chose not to. They chose to do one thing—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell on a point of order.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I've been here 16 years now, and I've found out that we are able to lie in this room, we are able to—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member—he knows that is not a point of order. Would he please be seated?

I would ask the member from Nepean-Carleton to please withdraw her comment.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm sorry, Speaker. I was only repeating what he said. I do apologize. On the same point of order, he could also withdraw his comment.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** That's unparliamentary, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock, please. Minister of Infrastructure, member from Nepean-Carleton, I can stand and we can be here until 2 o'clock in the morning—lots of fun.

Could the member from Nepean-Carleton withdraw the comment? I need to hear a clear withdrawal.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I withdraw.

Again, the question then becomes, "Why should anyone believe what this government has said over the past eight years, given the promises they made and their refusal to keep them?"

I remember first coming to this chamber a little more than five years ago to address, in my maiden speech, some of the challenges our province has faced as a result of this government. At the time, even thinking about the parents of autistic kids who were being taken to court by this government, which had promised at the time that it would make life easier for those children and clearly didn't—in fact, I remember they took them to court. The reality is that this is what this government does. They said anything they wanted to get elected, and then they turned their back on those same families.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm getting a rise out of them, but the reality is that the truth hurts. This is what you've done to the province. This is who you are. This is what you've done.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** You're a loser, Lisa.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It didn't take long. Order, please.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I think I was just called a loser by the member from Oakville. Listen to this. This is the level of the debate that this Liberal government has dragged us into. They can't face the facts. They have decided that they are going to debate anyone in this institution who decides to speak against them and speak the truth.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The reality is that I'm telling him I've been to Oakville, and the folks in Oakville have told me several times. In fact, we had one of our largest nominations in the entire province in the city of Oakville, where Terence Young, our former MPP who is now an MP, won. It was amazing that night: over 800 people



there. In Carleton–Mississippi Mills we had 800 people as well. People are fighting for Progressive Conservative nominations in this province because they want change, and the vehicle for change in Ontario today is through Tim Hudak and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, because people know that we need broad-based tax relief. We need changes in Ontario. We need to ensure that the people of this province send people to Queen's Park based on a solemn promise and that they deliver back to their communities and they don't turn their backs—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Education. Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Speaker, I'm able to speak above them because I can tell you something: I speak with the people of Ontario behind the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus. I have to tell you something: They believe us. They do not believe them. Time and time and time again, this government has let them down, whether that's on taxes, whether that's on scandals, whether that is their treatment of autistic children, which is one thing that became a passion of mine, given the failures of this current McGuinty Liberal government.

We will continue to debate this resolution for as long as we're able to do this before the government invokes further closure on debate on any other matter. I must say that every member of the Progressive Conservative caucus is committed to speaking to this motion because we firmly believe that this government, if elected, will raise taxes.

As I said, my colleague and I participated in something called the blue blitz on Friday. We had a wonderful time. Where were you—in Guelph?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I was actually initially in Chatham, and then I went to Wallaceburg. After that—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would remind the member from Nepean–Carleton to speak to the Chair, please.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** He was in Chatham and Wallaceburg—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Then after that, St. Thomas and Aylmer.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —and then after that, St. Thomas and Aylmer. So he had a four-city tour, as did I, on Friday. It was amazing, just the level of energy and the commitment by the Progressive Conservative candidates, the support that they're receiving from the people of the province.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Sixty communities.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The reality is, 60 communities now have said that they want change, and that feels pretty good for the people who now, for eight long years, have suffered under this tax-and-waste government.

We have recruited some really great candidates, who were able to come out and share our message of tax relief.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Monte McNaughton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Monte McNaughton, for example, in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. We have Rocco

Rossi from Eglinton–Lawrence. I think a few of the Liberals over there may know who he is. Kevin Gaudet, a former federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, actually remembers the pledge, that solemn pledge I was telling you about earlier today that Dalton McGuinty himself had signed. He said he would not raise taxes, and then he turned around and he did it. He is one of our candidates. He's a great candidate. He's going to stand up for Ontario families. He's going to join people like Pam Hundal, in Brampton, and Sanjeev Maingi, also in Brampton. In that community, they are so strong. They're working hard. We've been out talking about hydro rate increases. We've been out talking about the local health integration networks, which, by the way, Tim Hudak has committed to scrapping and putting that whole \$250 million into front-line health care.

I can tell you something: The wonderful thing is, the money is going to go to where it's intended to go on October 7, when Tim Hudak is Premier, and we've got the team behind him to do just that. We've got people like the member from Whitby–Oshawa, a very strong advocate for children with mental health issues. We also have our member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who was, I think, one of Ontario's best education ministers, and she'll continue to be a strong voice in a Progressive Conservative government when we form the government.

We have the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, near my riding, a very strong voice and a very vocal voice, as is the member for Oxford, for the agricultural community and the rural communities in our province. In fact, that's why one of our key platform commitments to rural communities is something that's very important, that was mentioned with Jim McDonell, our candidate in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, on the weekend, which is restoring that gas tax money to its rightful place, to every community in Ontario, not just to big cities, like this government does. All those rural municipalities right now in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Leeds–Grenville, where my colleague Steve Clark is from—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Wellington–Halton Hills.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —Wellington–Halton Hills—they're all going to now have their fair share, which this government, sadly, took away. Even with the tax dollars that we are sending there, this government has found an inequitable way of distributing that money.

I must say, Speaker, that I am proud to stand up on behalf of Ontario families who have sent me here. As you know, I had an opportunity, throughout the past year and a bit, as revenue critic for the Ontario PC caucus, to travel the province and to speak to stakeholder groups. We've spoken to everyone from hairstylists, to people who do shoe-shining, to people who offer health care services through home care, to others who do snow removal. They all tell me one thing: They just simply can't afford this government anymore.

1610

We heard from lawyers who told us that they were going to have raise their rates and it was going to become more unaffordable, as I spoke to earlier in this session.



We talked to people who are helping families with their mutual funds, those MERs—mutual fund expense ratios—that were going to see an increase as well.

Quite honestly, this group across the way needs to have a frank discussion with itself to see if there's any way that they could actually do what we're talking about, which is broad-based tax relief for people in this province. But they have not. They have found creative ways to bring in taxes.

Let me give you another example. When we talked about the eco fees, these 9,300 different household items that were being hit by the eco tax on same day that the HST was brought in—you will remember that. That was the day that we started to see even household cleaners see a new tax, and—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Grass seed.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Grass seed in the riding of Wellington—Halton Hills went up, and these protests occurred right across Ontario. It was quite remarkable, because people had had enough already. It was really the moment—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I felt sorry for Gerretsen at that press conference.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Yes, exactly. My colleague from Halton Hills said that he felt sorry for the previous Minister of the Environment, Mr. Gerretsen, at that press conference, as did I. I thought it was too bad he'd been sold up the river. But the reality is, it wasn't just a tax grab; it was a sneaky tax grab. It was brought in through the back door; it wasn't even brought in through this chamber. They increased taxes without bringing it to the Ontario Legislature. I've never heard of that being done before, but Mr. McGuinty was so crafty in how he had done it that he figured out a way to raise taxes behind the backs of the Ontario public.

But listen, they won't forget it; I can tell you that. I remember those protests. They happened here in Toronto; I believe they happened in London. They happened right across the province—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Spontaneous.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** And they were spontaneous. They were people who had just had enough already, and there was just one more needle in that haystack. The reality is, it was the straw that broke the camel's back—that's the analogy I was trying to make there, Speaker, but it's so hard when you're being shouted down by the ministers of the crown.

The reality is, we're going to continue to press for tax fairness. We will press on October 6, moving forward for tax relief within our own government. And we're looking forward, I might add, to the next couple of weeks when this chamber rises, for us to actually be in the communities with the people we do represent, to share with them our plan forward that Tim Hudak will be releasing to the public.

We already know some of the key issues we're going to offer. One is to make sure that hydro prices are affordable for Ontario families. This government has taken prices and they've skewed them so badly toward

the unaffordable that it is quite sad. I believe that has now become the number one issue that my constituents call us about, how unaffordable that is.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** How are you going to keep the lights on?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** And I understand: You should pay your bill and keep the lights on. That's a very important thing, Minister. But do you know what the problem is?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Transportation.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Well, capacity is one thing; affordability is another. I think the reality is that this is a government that doesn't understand how to ensure that there is a consumer ability to pay.

I think that this is a government that's pretty out of touch as well. I feel sorry for them. But the reality is, they're going to continue to talk their talk, they're going to continue to insult their opponents, and they are going to continue to shout us down. But there will be one decision on October 6 that I believe people will make, and it will be for tax fairness.

The problem that my colleagues across the way have is that they continue to promise no new taxes, and then they turn their back on the voter and they implement them. When I look at this motion, government motion 74, this is a government that says that they reject increases or decreases to taxes. This is a government that has never met a tax hike it didn't like. Even if it makes no sense to tax it, they tax it—like the seed, calling it an environmental hazard, apparently. It just goes with some of the bizarre policies.

In fact, last week, I remember standing in this chamber about contraband tobacco, and the Liberal member from Ottawa—Orléans said that Conservatives have never been on the side of children—never. And do you know what was interesting? On Friday, I was in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell with our candidate, talking about taxes, and I got an email from Councillor Bob Monette, who called on the member from Ottawa—Orléans either to apologize to his constituents or to resign. He chose not to. He chose not to apologize, so the councillor there had called on him to resign. And that's a very interesting dynamic in that community, when those things start to occur.

But we're going to continue to press for tax relief. We're going to continue to speak for Ontario families. We're going to continue to hold this government to account for their reckless tax hikes, their reckless mismanagement of tax dollars once they're in their hands, and we're going to continue to ask them the tough questions until we're fortunate to form government and follow the plan we have promised to follow. It's a novel idea: "Promise made, promise kept." I believe the last time that happened in this province was when a man named Mike Harris was Premier, who made promises and he kept them. I can tell you something: He did everything he said he would do.

*Interjections.*



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** He did everything he said he would do. This government did everything it said it wouldn't. That is quite a legacy: "Everything we said we wouldn't, we did. Every promise we made, we broke."

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Transportation. Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Can you believe that, Speaker? Even their own members are sitting over there, shaking their heads.

I can tell you something: I am shocked and appalled by the behaviour of some of the members over there in not representing their constituents on the floor of the House when I know they are getting the same calls that we are, when I know that they are getting the same emails—if I even go through this list of folks; let me just go through here.

For example, John Pucci from Hockey Northwestern Ontario, who is from, I believe, Thunder Bay—I think I met with him as he met with Tim Hudak. He's opposed to the HST.

I believe we have another quote here—I've got so many pieces of paper here, Speaker, but I believe I had one here from Barrie. That's a Liberal riding. We had one from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. That's a Liberal member-held riding. We're getting emails and phone calls from Liberal constituents saying, "Please stand up to these tax hikes." "Please stand up to this Liberal government because they don't stand up for me," and we're going to continue to do that. There's no doubt about it.

My colleague the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who is our finance critic, has been very vocal in opposing this government's reckless tax hikes. He continues to be astonished—I know this from having spoken with him—at the level of taxation that they've brought in to make life unaffordable. He has been a steadfast advocate—and he'll be joining the debate soon—on tax relief for the Ontario family. We're looking forward to bringing forward, when the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka is a minister, broad-based tax relief.

I've already spoken about you, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and the great work you're doing as a rural advocate, making sure that all of those gas tax monies are applied fairly and evenly right across Ontario. You've done a tremendous job on that.

So, all this is to say, in the last 39 seconds I have after this hour-long debate, that we're going to continue to press ahead for broad-based tax relief for Ontario families. We're going to stand up here, we will exhaust this debate, and we will never let the people down who have sent us here. We only wish the same would occur on that side of the aisle, where those folks over there on the red team would stand up and stand with their constituents, because they have two weeks left of this Legislature. They can do the right thing. They could have, last week, endorsed our resolution for no new taxes, but they chose not to.

I'm looking forward to—thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We have certainly reached the silly season in this place, I must say. We can tell that by the level of debate in this place and also the motion, and that's what I would like to speak to.

"Why in God's name would the government want to come with such a motion two weeks before the end of this House session prior to a provincial election?", you've really got to ask yourself. It's like going up and trying to remind people of all the promises that you broke prior to the last election, by the actions that they took since being elected, and then saying, "Trust me. I've got this motion in the House that basically makes it okay that I broke all of these promises."

It seems to me kind of a silly thing to do. At a time when the government says it's got important business to move forward, at a time when the government should be debating issues that really matter to the people across this province, around joblessness, around the state of health care, around the state of education and other issues, this government brings in what is essentially a political motion.

God, I would love nothing better than to have a political debate, but let's have that in a provincial election. Let's not have it in this place. This particular motion is nothing more than the Liberal Party—and I'm not even saying "the government," but the Liberal Party—trying to put some distance between themselves and their actions.

1620

I say to the government: Be careful what you ask for, because you will get the kind of speeches that you just got from the members of the opposition, the Conservative Party, who are going to come at you every which way they can because you're opening up and giving us the opportunity to do so. I say to the government across the way: The way that you stand up for your record is to run in the next election, and then the people of the province will decide yea or nay on your agenda and how you have done vis-à-vis the promises you made in previous elections and how you governed the province in the last four years. To come into this House and to bring this particular motion forward I think is not very smart politics at all on the part of the Liberal Party. I'm wondering if the people running the campaign for the Liberal Party of Ontario are the same people who ran Mr. Ignatieff's campaign federally, because it certainly seems to me that it's the same kind of strategy, and it's a strategy that, quite frankly, didn't work in the last federal election; I don't expect it's going to work very much in this election.

Let me get to the motion. It reads as follows—first of all the title: "Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth." Why would a government have to put a motion in the House two weeks before the House rises about an Ontario tax plan for job growth? I think the title says every-



thing. On job growth, there have been lots of jobs shed in this economy of Ontario over the last number of years, and, yes, some of it is very much related to the recession; nobody is going to argue otherwise. But this government's response to the recession has been absolutely abysmal, and so they feel a need to talk to the issue of joblessness by saying, "Look at this. We have a tax plan for job growth." Tell that to workers in southwestern Ontario and southeastern Ontario, in northern Ontario and in Toronto, who, quite frankly, have lost their jobs in this recession and have been waiting for a provincial or federal government to do something that could make their lives easier and give them some hope so that they and their families know that, at the end of the tunnel, there is light, and when they do reach that light, there will be a job and enough money to give them the standard of living that they want for themselves and their kids. "No," the government says. "We have to have this motion, motion number 74, Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth." I'll go back to the job growth thing in a second, but the very fact they say "job growth" tells you they're feeling spectacularly sensitive in that area.

Then they talk about the Ontario tax plan inside the title of the motion. Tax plan? I hope this government runs on the HST in the upcoming provincial election, because I can tell you, if they are not, we will, and I know the Conservatives will, because the HST is about as hated a tax as the GST under Brian Mulroney. Do you remember what happened to Brian Mulroney? He brought in the GST and he was relegated to two seats. A governing party of Canada that had been long established in this country, introduced the GST at the federal level, and then what did they do? They did that, and the voters of Canada in the next election threw them all out except for two seats: Elsie Wayne from eastern Canada and Mr. Jean Charest, who's now the leader of the Liberal Party and the Premier of Quebec. They were the only two to come back. Please, run on the HST; I want you to. I want you to run around the province during the leaders' tour when the plane and the bus of the Premier go from town to town in northern Ontario, and I hope he comes to Timmins, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Moosonee and Attawapiskat and he talks to people about the HST, because I can tell you, it is going to be a winning combination for moi and anybody running in opposition to this government, because people are mad at the HST, and rightfully so. At a time when people were losing their jobs by the hundreds of thousands, when people lost income and had a hard time trying to make ends meet, this government says, "I'm going to go and sock you with another tax."

Yes, here we are. We have a motion on the part of the Liberal Party—and I'm not going to say "the government of Ontario," because certainly to God this hasn't come from the government; it has to come from the Liberal Party—on Ontario's tax plan for job growth. Clearly, the government is feeling sensitive to the issue of taxation in this province and their policy, and clearly they're feeling sensitive to the issue of job growth.

Let's read the motion, and it's in the name of Mr. Duncan, the illustrious Minister of Finance from one of the Windsor ridings: "That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario families"—well, there's the first part, as I was alluding to in the title: "making life easier for Ontario families," because the government is recognizing—or the Liberal Party, I should say—in this motion that life isn't easier for average families in Ontario, because if it was, they wouldn't have to say it; they'd be doing something else right now.

People in Ontario are feeling the pinch. They've lost their jobs. The workers who worked at Xstrata, the workers who worked at the Tembec mill in Smooth Rock Falls, the workers who worked in Dubreuilville, the workers who worked in plants in Windsor and all over this province who have lost their jobs have gone from making a very good salary to having almost no salary in some cases. Yes, some people have returned to work, but the majority of people have not returned to the types of jobs they had prior to this recession.

The fact that the government has to say "to make life easier for Ontario families" is a recognition that life has gotten harder—lost your job, having to make ends meet. The price of gas is going up. The price of electricity has gone up. The price of everything has gone through the roof. How do you get a good wage if you're not working? You're having to survive on minimum wage jobs or better by a couple of bucks an hour. In some cases, people are still caught in unemployment insurance or what we used to call welfare.

So people are feeling rather pinched, and I think the fact that the government has to say "to make life easier for Ontario families" speaks to how families aren't feeling that life is all that easy. Families are, quite frankly, feeling the pinch. It's not true just in my constituency; it's true across all constituencies in this province. People are not better off after seven years of a McGuinty government.

Has this government done some good things? Absolutely, they've done some good things. They've done some good things in education and a few other things that we can talk about.

But for the average issue, for the person at the doorstep, the person living at home, it's "Am I doing any better in my life today when it comes to how my family is able to enjoy the joys of life?" When you're having to struggle to pay the mortgage or the rent, and in some cases, yes, you've lost your house, when you're having to struggle to make payments on your credit card, just minimum payments of interest every month—because people have had to go to their credit cards to pay their bills because they don't have enough money. How many people like that do you know, the member from Renfrew, who come to you or who you run across in your constituency?

Today a guy at the airport was telling me he lost his job working at Xstrata. The guy is driving a cab now because that's the only real job he's been able to get. He



went from a job where he was making probably \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year—he and his wife both lost their jobs because they both worked at Xstrata, and now they're having to survive on two minimum wage jobs. They had to use their credit cards to try to keep their kids in college—because they're at that age. One of their kids is going to college in Toronto, and the other one was almost done university at the time. They had to make sure that their kids continued their education, so they basically lived off the credit card. That's how they paid it. They didn't live life; they just paid for the bills of their kids, because they want to make sure that their kids get a good start in life. Having to do that is a pretty tough thing when you're 40 or 50 years old and looking towards your own retirement. You see your debt going up because you're not able to make ends meet.

In some cases, people are losing their homes. I know plenty of families across Ontario—well, I know people in my riding, but it's the same across Ontario—where people have had to give up their houses. They've had to sell them because they can't afford to keep them, because they lost their job, they're not making the income they used to make and, as a result, are not able to keep up the family home. Their municipal taxes have gone up. The price of electricity has gone up.

The woman who lived behind my place—I'm on Middleton Avenue; she lived on Bannerman—sold her house about three years ago. When her husband died about three years ago, they went from two people on a pension to just her. She couldn't afford to keep her house; she had to sell it. She didn't want to sell the house. It was the pride and joy of this woman and her husband that they had managed to pay this house off over a number of years. They had a little bit of enjoyment there. They had a nice little garage in the back; a little garden. Life was good. But she couldn't afford to keep it. She had to sell it because, as she said, "I can't pay the monthly bills, even though the thing is paid off, with my pension that's barely \$1,000 a month." By the time she cashed out her old-age pension and the CPP that she was entitled to, I think she was at around \$1,100 or \$1,200 a month. She said, "I add up all my bills. I don't have enough money to buy groceries. I can't make peanut butter sandwiches for my grandson." That's the one story she told me. So it's really tough out there.

The fact that the government says "to make life easier for Ontario families" in this motion speaks to the fact that the Liberal Party of Ontario knows that they're vulnerable there and they're looking for some way to create—how would you say—excitement for the Liberal brand and trying to tell people they've done a whole lot.

1630

Well, I would say to the governing party, the Liberal Party of Ontario, that if you feel that way, have that debate in the election, not in the Legislature. There are other things we can be doing in this place, but nonetheless, you bring these types of motions.

It goes on to say: "That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario

families and help our economy remain strong...." Well, there's the second thing they're avowing inside this motion. They're talking about the health of the economy. The health of the economy is not strong.

Yes, Ontario and Canada have done better compared to the United States and others, and I would argue that there's a very simple reason for that: We are a natural resource economy. When it comes to mining, when it comes to oil, when it comes to natural gas, when it comes to all those natural resources that are abundant in Canada and specifically in Ontario, we are doing quite well, because people want to buy our copper, they want to buy our zinc, they want to buy our oil and gas and they want to buy our gold. They want to buy the things we produce out of natural resources. So if you look at the Toronto Stock Exchange, the real leaders driving the TSX are those types of industries that have led the way for Canada and Ontario.

The other part of it is that we have a much more regulated system of banking in Canada compared to other countries like the United States. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. Was it all created by Stephen Harper? Darned right it wasn't.

In the last election, Mr. Harper was taking credit for how the banks run in this country. As a matter of fact, our banking system was long established before most of us were even thought of. To all of a sudden take credit for how well we did in Canada as a result of regulation of the banks, I thought, was a bit much. Nonetheless, one of the reasons we weathered the storm is that in Canada over the years, we have set a fairly good system of trying to keep an eye on the banks to make sure they don't have the kind of latitude to make bad loans, as we saw in the United States. As a result, we did better in Canada.

What's the word here again? "The economy remains strong." Is the economy strong? Absolutely not. Go and take a look in Ontario. Go and look in places like Sioux Lookout, Windsor and Sarnia. Go around this province—Kingston, other than the university there. The economy is not doing what it used to before. People are struggling. People are trying to figure out if they can manage to keep their doors open, in some cases. Yes, some of them have turned the corner, because things are starting to turn around. As with all recessions, there's a beginning, a middle and an end, and we're probably in the middle of the process. We're certainly not at the beginning, and we're certainly not at the end. But in the end, a lot of people out there are struggling.

Some are making decisions about whether they even want to invest in Ontario. I can tell you that there really is a sense, because of actions by this government, that Ontario is not a good place to invest. I don't like saying that, but if you look in the forestry sector, the Ontario Forest Industries Association and others involved in the forest industry were telling this government, through Bill 151, the forest tenure act, and in other bills the government did prior to this, and the caribou habitat legislation under the Endangered Species Act and all kinds of other things—they've been saying to the government, "Listen,



you're making it tough for our people to go to our boards and ask that money be invested in Ontario in order to modernize and expand our mills. Quite frankly, it is getting very expensive to do business in Ontario."

When you go and talk to the people who have to make the decisions at places like Eacom, like Tembec, like De Beers Canada, like Goldcorp, it is getting a little bit harder for them to make the argument to invest money in Ontario. In some cases, when those companies have a choice between more than one project, one in Ontario and one, let's say, in Quebec or somewhere else in Canada, unfortunately we're losing out, because the Quebec government, for example, although not perfect, has really done some things that are interesting in order to assist the Quebec economy.

Last week, we saw the government announce their version of the northern growth plan. The Liberal government in Ontario announced the northern growth plan—I don't know—about two months ago. Most people laughed at it. "If anything at all," they said, "they've got a plan to make a plan." That's what they announced in that growth plan announcement.

We said at the time—not only myself but other people in northern Ontario—that the problem with the growth plan was that it was not only a plan to make a plan, but it didn't have anything tied to it that would give you an indication that something was going to happen out of that plan. There was no money tied to it, there were no real objectives tied to it and there were no strategies or initiatives that were going to be implemented as a result of it. So it ended up becoming a plan to make a plan, similar to what they said in the leadup to the last provincial election.

The Liberal government in Quebec went out and said, "We've got a plan." It was very similar, actually, to the Ontario plan if you look at it. I've had a chance to read it. What they did was some specific things in order to try to get that plan to do something. They have some initiatives.

For example, they went to Hydro-Québec—and I can't believe this; only in Quebec would you do this, right? They went to Hydro-Québec and said, "You have an economic responsibility"—and social, too, I would suppose—"to the people of Quebec. You're producing electricity as a result of the water that flows through our rivers across Quebec, and we want you to take some of that money and reinvest in it northern Quebec in order to help with economic development and also improve on social infrastructure." So in the northern growth plan of Quebec, Quebec Hydro is putting up \$10 million a year towards that alone.

That's only 10 million bucks. I recognize that doesn't fix all the problems of northern Quebec; it certainly would not fix all the problems in northern Ontario. But the point is that the Quebec government said, "Hey, Quebec Hydro is doing very well, thank you very much, and they owe to it to northern Quebec, where we get most of our energy from, to put some money back other than the money they put by regular means of hiring people and doing the kinds of activities they do in producing electricity."

The government of Quebec announced about \$250 million to fund initiatives to assist the northern economy of Quebec to create the jobs, because what they said in their plan is similar to what Ontario said, except they're taking some actions. They said, "It is to everybody's advantage if northern Quebec"—or in our case "northern Ontario is doing well because wealth that is created in northern Ontario is benefiting everybody in Ontario and Canada." Why? Because a lot of that capital comes from southern Ontario. A lot of the expertise that supports some of those companies up north is based here in Toronto specifically and in southern Ontario. Contractors, suppliers, consultants and such who benefit from the riches created in the north are based in southern Ontario.

So the fact that the government's got to say in a motion—and I'll read it again—"help our economy remain strong" is a real indication that the government recognizes that the economy isn't strong. The Liberal Party has put forward this particular motion to try to counter the arguments that the economy is strong.

I look at just one little thing alone. Two budgets ago the Ontario government said in the budget, "Ring of Fire." We all fell into the Ring of Fire. It's like the Johnny Cash song. I won't sing it today, thank God. I don't have a guitar with me. But it was going to be the saving grace of northern Ontario. This is the thing that was going to help all of us create jobs in northern Ontario, and it was going to help all of the Ontario economy. I couldn't agree more. I don't think you'll find a northerner, you won't find a southerner, you won't find a Canadian who doesn't believe that the Ring of Fire can create wealth in this province and in this country. But how does that happen if the government's not prepared to do what it needs to do?

Here's the first thing they've got to do: They've got to say to the Ring of Fire people, "We're serious to sit down with you and help develop the infrastructure that you're going to need to access your site." Imagine if Ford Canada said, "We're going to build a brand new auto plant 30 miles north of the 401." The province of Ontario, rightfully so, would build a freeway to get to the Ford plant. They'd bring the water and sewer in. They'd bring the hydro lines in. They would bring all of the infrastructure that plant needs to be able to run 30 miles north of the 401—and rightfully so. There's a net economic return for the government of Ontario in investing in those particular infrastructures because it will create economic activity that creates jobs, that creates wealth. That's taxation that goes back into the Ontario economy—no question. But why is it that in the Ring of Fire the government's not prepared to pick up some of the infrastructure costs of developing road or rail and hydro to go up into the Ring of Fire?

I'll tell you what's going to happen, because I've seen this picture before. De Beers Canada, which in my riding operates a diamond mine 90 miles west of Attawapiskat, built their own hydro line, not subsidized by the province of Ontario. Five Nations Energy, the First Nations,



helped to build it. They created a business to be able to go into the business of transmitting electricity. There was some involvement on the part of the government on that. But essentially, it was developed entirely with private money through De Beers. The building and the maintenance of the winter road to service the site up at De Beers—they get about the same kind of money that they got before the mine ever showed up for that winter road, which is something like 100,000 bucks a year. Can you imagine getting \$100,000 a year to maintain a road in southern Ontario that's probably about 500 kilometres long, 400 at the minimum? Give me a break. We can't even maintain a winter road for a world-class diamond project like the Victor diamond mine.

1640

If the government is serious about the Ring of Fire moving forward, it seems to me that we should be sitting down with those people in the mining industry who are involved—the Noronts and others; Cliffs resources, KWG—and say, “Listen, we want to sit down with you and we want to talk about how we can build infrastructure together that will service your needs as mining companies, that will serve the needs of the First Nations people in that area, and that will serve the needs of Ontario into the future,” and Ontario will become a part of building the road, the rail, whatever needs to be built in order to maintain those mines. It's not as if we're building the plant for them. All we would do is build the infrastructure to get the plant up and running. They've got to build the plant themselves. But why isn't any of that done?

For example, training: Why aren't we sitting down with those companies and saying, “We will have aggressive training programs in order to develop the manpower needed to construct and operate those mines”? There's a huge pool of unemployed people living around the Ring of Fire, communities with 90%, 95% unemployment—places like Marten Falls, Webequie, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat, Peawanuck. There's a whole bunch of communities, and you can draw a workforce out of those communities, but there's training that's lacking. When you've got people who are not working because of the bad economic situation in their communities, for them to be hired as mechanics, electricians, secretaries, or mine workers, whatever it might be, you need to train them. Why aren't we serious about doing those kinds of things?

The government, I think, is not serious about that whole line about how you can help our economy remain strong, because here was an opportunity announced in the budget two years ago, and the government, in two years, other than putting together the Ring of Fire coordinator, has not done anything in order to advance the cost of building that project.

And here's the last thing they should do: They should say, “In exchange for us supporting developing your infrastructure needs and doing the type of things that you need to do in order to make sure you have cheap electrical power and access to your site etc., you will do

all the refining and smelting in Ontario.” Then they would have to build a refinery/smelter here in Ontario.

Did you know that there were about 20 refinery/smelters in this province about 20 years ago? We're down now to about two, because mining companies that are now owned by companies that are no longer Canadian are moving their refining capacities into China, where the demand is. I think that is a really short-sighted move on our part. Would Ralph Klein or would the premier of Newfoundland allow the transformation of oil and gas to happen, by and large, outside of their provinces? Some of that happens, but not to a large degree. Does Norway give its natural resource of gas without getting something back? Absolutely not. Those countries understand that the natural resources are a finite resource and that you've got to maximize the benefit out of those things while they last. To allow mining companies or resource extraction companies to come in and extract the ore and not add value to it and not give economic benefit to the region from which it's being taken is absolutely ludicrous.

I would predict, if we continue down this path, that the Ring of Fire will still be something we're talking about a year or two or three down the road. And I can guarantee you, Madam Speaker, if we form government on October 7, one of the things that our government will do, under the leadership of Andrea Horwath, is to make sure that we deal with those issues so that in fact we can get those types of developments to come into Ontario, that Ontario is a place that you're interested in investing in. But you can't do that in the way that this particular government is going on.

Carrying on with this particular motion—and this is only line 2; my God, I could go on here—“Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth as reaffirmed in the 2011 budget removes 90,000 Ontarians from the income tax rolls....” Well, yeah, that's true: They have set it up so that there are 90,000 people less paying taxes today. But some of those numbers are just people who are unemployed. It's pretty easy to take the number 90,000—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, but seriously. There is more unemployment in this province, and there's less people paying taxes. The government has changed the tax rules so that the threshold by which you start paying taxes is higher, which takes people off the tax rolls; I understand that. But every government has been doing that. This is not the first government to have done that. God, Bob Rae did it, Mike Harris did it, Ernie Eves did it, and, yes, Dalton McGuinty did it. We've been moving down that way for a long time. Why? Because it has long been recognized that the tax burden has shifted from corporations and those who used to pay the majority of taxes in this country to the working class. There was a time, not that long ago, when most of us were probably born, back in the 1950s, when a larger percentage of tax was collected from the activities of business than there was from individuals, and that has shifted over the years.

Over the years, there's been this move to give corporate tax cut after corporate tax cut after corporate tax



cut, and we're now down to—I think around 17% is the corporate tax rate in Ontario, somewhere around there, 17% or 18%. It used to be about 50%. I'm not arguing that we return to 50%; that's not my argument. My argument is, yes, the government has taken 90,000 people off the lowest end of the income scale, rightfully so. But what they've also done is removed corporations which are profitable from paying more tax than they did before. As a result, we've lost the revenue, which means the government had to create another tax—the HST—to make up the room.

What they've done is taken the tax off the lowest income, they've taken the tax off the highest income and they've slogged it onto the rest of us. So now we've got the HST, where we're paying full HST on things that we never used to have to pay HST on before and people are feeling it. People are hurting, people are mad, and rightfully so, for good reason.

So when the government says in this motion that "Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth as reaffirmed in the 2011 budget removes 90,000 Ontarians from the income tax rolls," darn right they did, but at a cost. Everybody in this province is now paying more taxes as a result of this government than they did prior to the government coming to office. That's the bottom line.

The government can try to spin it any way they can. The government can say, "Oh, we've taken taxes off the lowest income. We've taken the taxes off the highest income. We've done this, that and the other thing." Yes, they're real measures. I don't argue that you've done those things. But the average person in this province is certainly paying for more hydro and certainly paying more taxes than they did before, so people are feeling the pinch.

Who am I to complain? I make \$131,000 a year in this place, but my hydro bill at my cottage went from about \$200 a month to about \$650 a month in the winter because of what you guys call smart meters, but it's a differential—what do they call it again?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Time-of-use.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —time-of-use policy, and also the increased hydro rates. I'm only electric out there because there's no natural gas, so I heat with wood and I use electricity. I was paying \$250 a month. That's what I used to pay and I used to think that was a lot of money. I'm up to over \$650 a month. So how do people afford—never mind to keep a cottage—to own a home when their hydro bill has gone up, in my case, more than double?

Thank God I make a good salary and I can afford to do it, but I'm telling you, there are a lot of people who can't, and at one point I won't be able to either. I'm not going to be here forever. At one point I will retire, in about 10 years' time, and I will have to retire on whatever income I've got. Hopefully, I get to retire. I hope the people of Timmins—James Bay continue sending me back. I would never presume that I know their decision. I feel fairly good about it, but the point is, if I retire 10 years from now, I'm going to have to make some decisions—cottage or the house, house or the cottage. You can't afford to keep them both, not in this particular environment.

Anyway, I just say to this motion that again it is pretty clear that the Liberal Party has its hand in here because they're trying to inoculate the government after seven years in office to issues that are strongly felt within Ontario.

Let me give you one that I thought was really hilarious. FONOM—everybody knows what FONOM is here, right? FONOM is the northern municipal association, essentially. We all had a chance to go and speak to it last week. I represented Andrea Horwath, Mr. Hudak was there in the afternoon following me, and following him was Mr. Bartolucci. I went there and brought greetings on behalf of Andrea and talked about the need for the province to provide predictable, sustainable funding on the capital side so that municipalities are able to plan. I talked about some of the things that we, as New Democrats, believe have to happen.

Mr. Hudak came in. He gave more of a political speech, I would say, less on the substance part of it. But then we had Mr. Bartolucci show up, and he had a 40-minute speech. I thought this was quite something. His whole speech was about, "Hey, listen. People up in northern Ontario have the impression that this government has not been consulting. I want to tell you that's not the case." And that was his 40-minute speech.

**1650**

I was down in Niagara at the police association meeting, where I represented the caucus in an all-party debate there on Friday morning, so I talked to delegates who were there from my riding and a few of our candidates who are running in the upcoming provincial election who were at that as well. We had a fascinating chat about that speech. What they said was that Mr. Bartolucci spent hardly any time—actually, spent no time—on the needs of municipalities. He spent the entire time attacking New Democrats and attacking Conservatives and talking about what a great job the government had done when it came to consulting the people of Ontario.

I wish I had the article with me, because I was reading it online this morning. Somebody pointed it out to me yesterday when I was having a chat with one of our candidates. I had to go and read it online. I thought it was just something—and it's reported in the paper as a 40-minute speech attacking New Democrats and Conservatives and speaking about how great a job this government has done on consulting northern Ontario. Then the article goes on to say that nothing could be further from the truth.

This motion is in the same line. It's like Darwinism. It's like revisionism. Well, not Darwinism; that's not fair. Darwin actually would be the wrong analogy, but it's revisionist history for sure. The government, by way of this motion, is trying to say, "Everything's fine. We have the best tax rate. You're feeling a lot better. The economy is doing great," when everybody feels that it's doing completely the opposite. The government, like the speech from Mr. Bartolucci on Friday in Timmins, at FONOM, is of the same ilk.

Then you get into the harmonized sales tax. That one takes the cake. The motion says that the plan "provides



93% of Ontarians with a permanent personal income tax cut, maintains the harmonized sales tax at the current rate and provides \$12 billion in tax relief for families and \$4.8 billion in tax relief for businesses...."

Imagine this: A government introduces a tax called the HST, and they find it necessary to have temporary relief measures to offset the cost of the HST until after the election. So what they've essentially done is, they've gone into your pocket and they've taken money out of your pocket every time you buy something, whether it be a service or a good, by way of the HST. They say, "People are really going to feel this and people are really going to be mad," so the government's response was, "Let's send them a cheque every so often. We'll send them a cheque. When they get a cheque—and hopefully they'll probably get one, oh, just about August, before the election."

The Tories tried this. It didn't work for you guys, if you remember.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I'm being fair here. Remember when they tried to do the same thing? It didn't work. Most people went, "No, I don't buy it. I don't buy getting a cheque in the mail as a way of making me forget that you charged me the HST."

Then there's the hydro one, which really takes the cake. We're in the House day after day after day talking about high electricity rates, and we, as New Democrats, say, "Take it off hydro." So the government comes in—they don't even take it off hydro—and they give us a 10% reduction on our hydro bill until when? Until after the next provincial election. Oh, my God. Do you think people are really going to buy it? Do you think people are going to go, "Oh, I just got my hydro bill. Let me see this here. Oh, Dalton McGuinty is giving me 10%."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What a nice guy, eh?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They don't think he's a nice guy, because they say, "If he has to give me a 10% rebate on my bill, here's the first problem: that he had to give me the 10%." That's the first problem—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It was too high in the first place.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —because that bill was too high. So it's an admission on the part of the government that the bill is too high, just as our tax bill is too high. Either they send you a cheque every six months or they take it off your hydro bill every month as a way of being able to say, "We're charging you too many taxes and we're charging you too much on hydro." So that's the first problem.

The second—

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** So why did you vote against it?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, we actually voted in favour of your 10%.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** So don't criticize it, then.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I am criticizing it. It's a temporary measure. Had the electricity rate not gone up, you would have never had to give it, is my point.

Here's the second part. The second part of this is: It's all going to end after the election. Do you think that voters are going to say, "I forget there's an election on October 6. Mr. McGuinty is going to keep on sending me a cheque every six months, and Mr. McGuinty is going to keep on sending me a 10% reduction on my hydro bill every month"? No, no; people don't buy it. This is an attempt to get to the next election, for the government members to run around and to say, "Oh, don't worry. Everything is fine. We're giving you all these rebates." The rebates will all finish, and the chickens will all come home to roost. And as Mr. Ignatieff found out in the last election, when the chickens roost, they ain't clucking no more. They just stop clucking. That's all I can tell you. Boy, oh, boy.

Can you believe it, Madam Speaker? Never in the history of Ontario has the Liberal Party come third in almost 90% of the ridings in this province. It's never been seen. If somebody would have told me that a year ago, I wouldn't have believed it. I would have thought that the Liberals were going to drop, that they were not going to form the next government—probably not a majority; maybe a chance at a minority. But, God, they were third almost everywhere.

In my riding, where the Liberals federally have always been sort of the reigning party, the Liberal Party in Timmins—James Bay—Algoma—Manitoulin had been Liberal since Confederation. That was Mr. Pearson's riding, the Right Honourable Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada. That riding went NDP the last time and, with Carol Hughes, it came back again and they increased the majority of the vote, and the Liberals ended up in third—unheard of. If you would have said to me "a \$100 bet," I wouldn't have taken it. But it tells you that people have caught onto this. It tells you that the people of Ontario are saying, "You know what? You ain't fooling me. At the end of the day, I know that these are temporary measures and that I'm going to be paying more after the next election. Let me get at you. Let me get to my ballot and the ballot box." I think that's what you're going to see in the next election.

It goes on to say—I'm about halfway through this particular motion; it's quite interesting—"Recognizes that with Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, the economy is turning the corner by creating more than 293,000 new jobs since the global recession...."

I think you should all take a bow; I really do. Everything's wonderful in Ontario. I want you to go to every riding in Ontario, every community you can between now and October 6, and I want you to tell people that they're doing better. I want you to look them in the eye and tell them that and see the response you get.

I was in White River last Monday—here's my week last week. I was in White River on Monday. Boy, oh, boy, are people feeling the pinch over there. The only employer has shut down. Dubreuilville, where the only employer has shut down, was the other community I was speaking to from that community as well. People are



hurting. Nobody's going to tell you that they're any better off.

Then I went to Niagara Falls at the end of the week, on Friday. I went in there Thursday night for a debate on Friday morning, and I'll tell you, other than tourism—thank God for tourism and thank God for the casino in Niagara Falls, because there's not a lot else going on. There was a whole bunch of industry that used to exist in the Niagara Peninsula that is completely gone. It's almost like you pick up the paper, and every week—at least every month—there is closure after closure after closure of plants across the southwestern part of the province.

So please, yes, go into Welland-Thorold, go into London, go into Hamilton, go into Sarnia, go into Timmins, go into Attawapiskat, go anywhere you want and tell people in the next election, "Vote for me because your life is better—seven years of the Liberal government." Please do that. I invite you to do that. I want you to do that, because I can tell you, they're going to reject you. People are hurting.

I'll give you a couple of stories from where I come from, Madam Speaker. You hear me often talk about northern Ontario; well, that's where I come from. As you come from Toronto and you talk about communities in your area, I'm going to talk about the people in my end of the province.

We'll do a little tour on Highway 11. We're just going to start from, let's say, Cochrane. It's a good place to start. Cochrane: one mill down. Smooth Rock Falls: the only mill gone, closed permanently. Hardly anything going on in between, and you get to Kapuskasing: Tembec is running, with a couple of shifts still there. Tembec, Kapuskasing—I've got to say that we've been lucky. We've been doing better than most. The good news in Kapuskasing is Tembec. The other good news is the reconstruction of the power dams, about \$3 billion, that Ontario Hydro or OPG is doing up there.

Keep on going: In Opatatika, the only mill in town is shut down permanently.

Go to Hearst: It's the same kind of story. There's closure, reductions of shifts. People are struggling to keep their doors open. Columbia Forest Products is doing better these days, but is still having a tough time. There are far fewer workers there than there were before. At Tembec, across the street, it's the same story.

Go into Lecours Lumber in Constance Lake—the same story. They're on layoff now until sometime, I believe, in June.

It's the story as you travel across northern Ontario on Highway 11, from one end of the province to the other, from Cochrane all the way over to wherever you want to go on Highway 11. It's community after community that has lost their employers. They're down.

You go into places like Dubreuilville—Dubreuilville is quite something. Dubreuilville is in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin. What happened there is that there used to be a sawmill that was started up by les frères Dubreuil—excuse me; I can't say that in English for

some reason, because it's a French name. That's probably a good reason why.

1700

Anyway, to cut a long story short, here's a community that had a sawmill. Everything that happens in that community was because of the sawmill. It was a small community of about 1,000 people. The mill employed pretty well everybody. The gas to buy for your car or your pickup is bought from a fuel pump on the mill. So the mill actually sells the gas to the residents because that's the only way you can do it there for the size of the market. Electricity generated comes out of the mill. Everything is tied to that mill. It shut down. The only thing that keeps that mill open today is because they've got to provide some of the basic infrastructure to the municipality.

So here they were, a mill operating about—they had just over a million cubic metres of wood. When the mill shut down, the government didn't do a lot in order to assist that community to try to figure out how to restructure or do whatever to open. The community took it upon themselves. They did a restructuring plan for their mill, and they said, "We can open up at a smaller capacity of 750,000 cubic metres. We need to keep the wood that we had, and we need the 200,000 or 250,000 cubic metres on the Big Pic Forest." Is it the Big Pic there? I may have my forests mixed up, but people will know where I'm driving with this.

Anyway, the long and short of the story: Last Friday or the Friday before, the community of Dubreuilville finds out that the wood that they needed to start up their mill had been allocated to somebody else. What does Dubreuilville do? The only game in town is forestry and they've effectively lost the wood to that community. Why didn't the government tie the wood to those communities so that they're able to make deals with neighbouring communities so that they can all benefit from whatever happens?

Why did they lose it? Because the government announced a good-news announcement in White River, where there is a possibility that there's going to be a biomass plant built to make jet fuel out of fibre from trees. It's a pretty interesting concept. Is there the financing in place for this project? Not yet; I certainly hope there is in the long run. Is this thing for sure going to get off the ground? Mayor Angelo certainly hopes for it; I was talking to him the other day. So do Marg and Mickey and different people that I talk to up in White River. Everybody wants this thing to go, and boy, they want to believe. But as Mickey, who worked in bush land operations for 40 years, was telling me, he's somewhat doubtful because all the government has really done is announced a wood allocation announcement and there's nothing to make the project go forward except for the interest of the proponent. There really isn't anything to ensure that this thing is going to go forward.

I've done some reading since this announcement, and I certainly hope this is technology that we can prove, and I certainly hope this is going to be good news. But the



amount of energy expended to make jet fuel, the amount of energy you'll get out of that jet fuel—you spend more energy growing, cutting, transporting and processing the tree, and making and transporting the fuel than the amount of energy coming out. What that means to me is that the economics of this are going to be very challenging. Is the government doing anything to deal with the challenge that'll be faced with this particular industry?

Is this a good idea? Absolutely. Listen: The problem that we have with all of our sawmills is the market for chips. There are less paper mills and less pulp mills running, so as a result there's no market for the chips for the sawmills. If the sawmills can't sell their chips, they can't operate. If this creates a market to sell the chips, that could be a very good thing. Why didn't the government say in this particular case, "You know what? We've got Dubreuilville, Wawa and other surrounding communities who are trying get up and running. If we structure this in the way that the chips that come from the sawmills in Dubreuilville, Marathon and different places are to go to this particular facility and the wood waste from the sawmills is used as a way of making the fuel, then it becomes a win-win, because then the sawmills have a market for their fuel." It means to say they probably get a premium on their waste wood, which would allow them to reopen their mills and allow the mill that needs the waste wood to make the fuel to be able to access that material to make the fuel. None of that is being done.

My sense is that what we're going to have, if this things gets up and running, is going to be a chipping facility. They're going to go out and cut the 90- or 100-year-old black spruce, jack pine—well, there's not as much jack pine there as there is in my end—birch and tamarack. They're going to take those trees at full length and they're going to chip them. It's a bad end-use policy when it comes to the use of wood, number one, from an environmental point of view, but number two, it does nothing to support the sawmills.

Why didn't the government come up with an approach—and we've been urging the government to do this, as New Democrats—to go to a best-end-use policy? It used to exist in this province. It was established by New Democrats under the leadership of Howard Hampton, when he was MNR minister, and followed up by Bud Wildman, who was the minister of the day—to say, "Listen: We know that the entire industry is able to survive if there are those synergies. If the sawmills can cut the tree, can use it for dimensional lumber, sell the waste wood to a market such as a pulp and paper mill or a biomass plant, so that we're able to use all of the scraps in the woods that are left on the ground—the tops and branches and the rest of it—and we can turn that into biofuel, it's a win-win for everybody. It's great for the environment, it's great for the workers, it's great for the communities and it's great for the companies. They can make some money."

But the government didn't do that. So when the government says in this motion—I should say again that it's

the Liberal Party, not so much the government: "Recognizes that with Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, the economy is turning the corner by creating more than 293,000 new jobs since the global recession," you know that the government is having to say this because a lot of people are feeling as if none of that is really happening, that in fact what we've got going on is, people have lost their jobs, and the jobs that are being created are, quite frankly, jobs that are lesser-paid than those they came from. They're feeling the pinch.

It goes on to say, "Rejects the introduction of a carbon tax as a measure that would hurt Ontario's economic growth...." it's interesting that they had to put that in. Think about it. They must be doing some polling. The Liberal Party of Ontario must be doing some polling to find out that people somehow think that the government is in favour of a carbon tax, because why else would they put this particular issue in the motion? Again, I say: Why did the government come forward with such a motion at a time two weeks before the House rises before an election? It's because, quite frankly, the Liberal Party is feeling rather—how would you say?—harried by the public, is feeling very vulnerable as a result of policies that they've introduced, and so people are really worried. I think—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm coming to that.

So why did they put this in? I think it's a reflection of the unpopular federal Liberal Party under Mr. Ignatieff, and they're trying to find some way to put distance between the lacklustre leadership and performance of the Liberal Party in the last election and themselves. I say that the Liberals have nobody else to blame but themselves. I think the Liberal Party of Canada is a dying brand. It's a reality.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, you were third in the last federal election. The Liberals still haven't accepted the loss.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** One election, Gilles. Come on.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They still have not accepted the loss, Madam Speaker. The reality is, the Liberal Party of Canada got whumped in the last election by both the Conservatives and New Democrats, depending on what province you were in. The quicker the Liberal Party recognizes that they got whumped, the better off. Why do I know that? Because I've been whumped before. I understand what it's like.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, but you came up, to live again.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, and it takes a while. What you need to do, and what the Liberal Party is not doing at this point, is to recognize that they are unpopular, that they owe it to the people of Ontario to be straight about their failures and their successes, and the only thing that they want to do is talk about the successes and not admit that they've had a lot of failures.

Come October 6, I think the people of Ontario in this next provincial election are going to say in volumes what



they feel about the Liberal Party. I can tell you—don't take it from me. We were polling, prior to the last federal election, in our party, and in their incumbent ridings, the Liberals were running third—incumbent ridings in this House. I would have never thought that would have been the case, but I think there are a lot of people who are upset over this Liberal Party and their management of policies in this province that have not done them well.

In the last few minutes, the last part of this thing—it ends as follows: "Rejects an increase"—Madam Speaker, this just beyond funny—"to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate...." Why do they have to say, "Rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate"? They're opposed to both an increase and a decrease on the HST. I'll tell you why: because there's a fear in Ontario—and the Tories are priming that fear—that the Liberals are going to raise the HST.

1710

Now, I would have thought nobody was stupid enough to do the HST in the first place. Oh, I take that back; that's not a nice word that I just said. I want to take it back.

Nobody would have thought that any political party would be as politically naive as to create an HST and raise taxes in the middle of a recession. Not even Bob Rae would have done that. But the Liberal Party did it. And the fact that there are some fears on the part of some, founded or unfounded, that they were prepared to raise and create an HST in the middle of a recession—that they would be prepared to raise it if they were re-elected and the economy was to turn around or not turn around.

So I think the government is again trying to inoculate itself. It's trying to say, "Trust me. I ran the last time that I wouldn't raise your taxes—whoops, I didn't do that. But I promise it again." That's essentially what they're saying here.

The Liberals—I really get a kick out of it—defence is, "Oh, my God, look at Nova Scotia." In Nova Scotia, the Darrell Dexter NDP government raised the HST there. And you know what? The people of Nova Scotia will have to pass judgment on that, not the people in Ontario. It'll be up to the people in Nova Scotia to decide if they thought that was or wasn't a good move. Was it something I would have done? Probably not. I don't think raising taxes in a recession is a smart thing to do.

I'm not on this bandwagon of the right wing that says, "Get rid of taxes; everything will work." Well, they did that in the United States. They're running trillion-dollar deficits in the United States. They had a Republican President in the White House, and they had a great time doing the tax cut agenda in the United States, and all they've managed to do is, by stealth, to get rid of public services by not funding them. That's what they've essentially done. Oh, no, excuse me; they do spend money on something—it's called the military. They have no problem spending billions of dollars on the military. They don't see anything wrong with that. Their deficit spending in that country is crazy. So I don't buy this

whole argument of the right wing that cutting taxes is going to create jobs.

Is there room for targeted tax cuts? Absolutely. If the government wants to talk about, "You know what? I have a program. You go and create some jobs and I'm going to help you by way of training. Go and create some jobs, and I'm going to help you by other forms of relief and, yes, maybe even some kind of tax measure." I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I say that as a New Democrat. But across-the-board tax cuts? Give me a break. We're giving tax cuts to the banks and other wealthy companies in Canada and the United States, and all they're doing is making more money. They're not doing anything to help the lives—did you see the interest rate on your credit card go down last month, as the banks make more record profits, as we give them tax breaks? Did you see loans become easier to get or your loans become easier to pay because of reduced interest rates? Absolutely not. Every time I turn around now, I get a fee from my bank. I get a fee for this, a fee for that and a fee for other things I don't know nothing about. They don't even publish how much money they make on fees. So here we are giving these people tax breaks, and they're not giving it back to us. So I say they've got to be targeted.

Andrea Horwath, leader of the New Democratic Party, is completely right on this. Jack Layton is completely right on this one. For a little while, maybe Mr. Ignatieff started to see the light, that you can't do across-the-board tax cuts. They just don't work, and the proof of that is, this government in Ontario, under the Liberals, and the federal government in Canada, under the Conservatives, have been having a great old time giving corporate tax cuts, and it has not led to the job creation that they talk about.

In this motion, they say, "And rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians...." They're saying on the one hand that they're opposed to an increase—because they're afraid people might think they might increase it—then they say they're also opposed to a decrease. My God, talk about a Liberal fence. They're straddling that fence pretty hard, trying not to come down on one side or the other. I think it's a pretty weird way of wording a motion.

Then it says, "And rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians the most, take \$3 billion out of health care and education funding and harm Ontario's economic recovery." They're taking more than \$3 billion out—give me a break. The tax breaks that they've given corporations in this province—I think we're up to something like \$2.7 billion that we've given back in corporate tax cuts. How can the government make an argument that diverting money from taxation is going to eliminate revenue to pay for these services when they're doing it themselves?

I just say to the government that it's a pretty oddly worded motion.

I say to the government, tell whoever your Liberal strategists are, and the Liberal Party of Ontario, that this



type of motion is best debated during an election. If you want to go out and have that debate during an election, please bring it on. That would be a very good debate for all of us to have in the next provincial election on the hustings and in all-candidates meetings. But for the government to bring forward a motion like this when they're saying they've got more interesting things to do is just going to slow the House down, because you're baiting the opposition to debate you on what is such a bad record of this particular government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to have 20 minutes this afternoon on this particular motion. We have a number of our members who are going to be speaking on this today as we sit late into this evening. I understand we're having night sittings starting this week. It's Monday, May 16—a week here, a constituency week and then one more week before we break for the summer. I know that night sittings usually begin at this point in the process, and I think that tonight we're going to be here until 9:30 or 10 o'clock, and I know there are four or five other members from our party who want to speak on this.

Before I get into the main part of my remarks, I just want to remark on the remarks of the Conservative member from Nepean–Carleton who spoke at some length about an hour and a bit ago, I suppose, and spent at least 50% to 60% of her time reading a list of items to which the new harmonized sales tax applies. I guess I'd just offer her a little bit of information: If she chooses to rise again and speak for that length of time, perhaps she could simply say to the people of the province of Ontario that we've merged our list with the federal list, and so everything you've been paying the GST on for 20 years is what you're going to pay the HST on.

The reason I mention that is that the official opposition here, the Conservatives in the province of Ontario, tend from time to time to refer to Stephen Harper and the federal Conservative government somewhat like the Messiah, and yet today they're very much criticizing a policy, the GST, that has been in place federally for close to 20 years. The GST has been applied federally to all those things for close to 20 years. So when you merge the tax system, ipso facto, that's what's going to follow. But the member chose to spend 30 minutes or so reading a list.

The Conservative government of Stephen Harper voted and passed legislation to create and allow for the HST in the province of Ontario. It was supported by three of the four parties. I've said before here in this House that the provincial Conservative Party, I think, has lost a lot of credibility when it comes to this particular policy. I know it's an opportunity for them, God bless them. I understand that. They see some political opportunity here, and that is translated into the position they've taken on the HST.

But I would suggest it is glaringly obvious to anybody who is following this debate at all that when the federal Conservative government passes a law allowing us to go

forward with it, and a Prime Minister who is an economist by training and is as ideologically opposed, I would suggest, to increasing taxes as any Prime Minister we've had in a long, long time endorses this policy and allows the province of Ontario, through federal legislation, to go forward with it—and on top of that, he gives the province of Ontario over \$4 billion to help with the transition to the single sales tax—perhaps sometime in the near future, when the provincial Conservatives choose to stand up and speak at length in opposition to the HST, they'll have an opportunity to address that glaring contradiction in their argument.

People know this. They can try to pull the wool over people's eyes all they want, but people who follow this know that it's good tax policy. The member who spoke just before me called it crazy. I guess there are 144 countries and four other provinces that are crazy. To this point, we've not heard either of the two opposition parties say they would repeal the single sales tax, and we all know why.

1720

When this motion was brought in, the reason I think it's necessary is that for the longest time in the province only half, I would say, if not even less of the story is being told when it comes to the tax reform we've brought in in the province of Ontario. The tax reform—the other half or more that's not being spoken about by either of the opposition parties—is the significant tax reductions that we have brought in, permanent, significant tax reductions, to personally help people in the province of Ontario. There is a long list of them. People will have likely seen communications from each of the members within their ridings on this topic.

Rather than go through a long, boring list of permanent tax reductions, what I like to tell people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan in terms of explaining this tax policy and why it's working is simply this: If it's so bad, as the opposition parties would have you believe, why haven't they announced that they're going to repeal it? If it's so bad, why did three federal parties vote in favour of it? If it's so bad, why did Stephen Harper transfer \$4.3 billion to Ontario to help us do it? If it's so bad, why are the poverty groups not marching on the front lawn of Queen's Park? Why is the daily food bank supportive of this policy? Why are the people that could be most adversely affected by tax policy not marching on the front lawn of Queen's Park? I ask that in all seriousness.

It's a pretty simple way of talking about it, because when I go to the doors, for me to have to stand there and try to explain tax credits to people and reductions in personal income tax—well, like most of us, their eyes glaze over very quickly. But when I ask them to ask the Conservatives or the NDP why those groups support this, they stop and they think for a little while: “Yes, why aren't poverty groups opposed to this?” They stop and think when I tell them that seniors' organizations are not opposed to the HST. They stop and they think. It's simple.

I've tried the longer explanation, where I talk about personal income tax reductions. I talk about the Ontario



seniors' property tax grants and the energy and property tax credits that have significantly reduced the burden on seniors and all homeowners in the province of Ontario. I talk to them about that, but it's really hard to hold people's attention—for me, too, if people are talking to me that way.

But when I ask them, "Why aren't seniors' organizations that represent the interests of seniors opposed to this? Why aren't the food banks and the poverty groups opposed to this?"—because they know it's not bad, and they know the other half of the story that nobody else wants to talk about. They know that, on balance, the left-leaning think tanks—the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which is more in line philosophically with the NDP than with anybody else—know it's not a bad thing and they support it.

Yet the rhetoric will not change. We see the election. We've known for some time what the focus would be. They'll campaign on the HST like Chicken Little: "The sky is falling." But the evidence is not there.

I've got some evidence that I'll share with you as well. Since the depths of the recession, Ontario has now recovered—is it 115% or 125%?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I think it's 117%.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** About 115%, 117% of the jobs lost, in other words, since the recession we've gained back. And over 90% of them—here's another myth being circulated, that they're all poor-paying, low-paying jobs—are full-time jobs.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, let me give you a few examples of good, full-time jobs. In the Bombardier plant in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, \$1.4 billion of provincial government investment; \$3.5 billion or so in contracts; 500 to 600 more people employed at that plant today—big jobs, good jobs with good benefits. Total employment in the plant today is at 1,000 people. It has not been that high for a long time.

There's a couple of Conservatives in the House today. The plant employees at Bombardier in my riding will remember very clearly that it was a Mike Harris government that very much announced, "We're not in the mass transit game. We're not investing in mass transit anymore. That's the city of Toronto's responsibility." And do you know what happened? Nothing happened forever, and the plant in Thunder Bay came close to closing on a number of occasions. These investments in mass transit are good for the environment, but they've also been very good for the people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan—500 to 600 more jobs. There's incredible diversification going on in the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan right now.

Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute: 104 jobs right now. We established, or helped to establish, that research institute with \$15 million from the Ministry of Research and Innovation, a ministry that never existed before we came to government and created it. We took the money away from that old group called the Ontario Innovation Trust. We took it away from them—and I was on the committee with the federal finance minister, ac-

tually, when he told me that the money all stays in southern Ontario. When I questioned that, he said, "That's because that's where all the scientists are." I said, "Well, maybe if you spend some money in Thunder Bay, the scientists will follow the money." Sure enough, a short time later, we created the Ministry of Research and Innovation, and \$15 million out of that ministry helped to establish the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute in Thunder Bay, at the health sciences centre—104 big-paying jobs. They plan to be at 200 in very short order.

Tornado Medical imaging systems, just established—an offshoot of the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute.

RegenMed, a bone and tissue bank, is going to hire 30 people—one of the best places in the country where this is going to occur. There's incredible diversification occurring.

I've got a list here of a whole bunch of other stuff when it comes to the economy, in Thunder Bay specifically, that I could read, and if time permits, maybe I'll get back to that.

But I did want to talk a little bit about forestry, because I've listened to the hoax that has been perpetrated in Ontario primarily by the NDP, I would say, but unfortunately a little bit more—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock for a second, please. I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I withdraw. Okay, I can't use that word. I will use, to replace that—who has got a synonym for that? I would say a misinformation campaign, or a myth, about the forestry industry and somehow our government's responsibility for what has happened in forestry. It's really remarkable. For seven years, they've tried. They won't change their position.

I'm going to read a couple of quotes to you from a gentleman by the name of—and he's speaking specifically about the New Democratic Party. This was in BC a couple of years ago. He's from Canfor, the CEO. His name is Mr. Jim Shepard. He was talking about the NDP in BC, directly related to forestry. He's the CEO of Canfor:

"As New Democratic Party Leader Carole James"—I'm not sure if she still is; maybe my friend from—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** She's not there.

"As New Democratic Party Leader Carole James was telling laid-off forestry workers this week she would help them reclaim their jobs"—and boy, could I speak for an hour just on that line—"the industry's top executives were preparing an unusual frontal assault on her...." Because we all know in this place that we don't usually hear that kind of rhetoric from them.

Here's what Mr. Shepard went on to say: "If the government was to change, heaven help us." He's the president and CEO of Canfor. Usually, he leaves this kind of language to others. He said, "I see an industry on its knees being taken advantage of by a party that is playing politics." That's what Mr. Shepard said.



"The biggest threat to any worker is if the investment community decides forestry is not the place to put their money." This was his concern about the language coming from the NDP leader.

Here's the best part. This is the one I like best: "Ms. James"—the former leader of the NDP—"is raising false hope"—I've used that language myself in here in the past—"among the province's 20,000 laid-off forest workers, he added. 'It's great to say'"—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member for Lanark.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** "It's great to say we'd like to get people back to work. But we are facing a biological disaster"—in BC, the pine beetle; that's the one half of it—"in the interior that is unprecedented and an economic crisis that we haven't seen the likes of in 80 years."

Mr. Shepard, who is the CEO of a forestry company, clearly summarized what I've been saying in this Legislature for a very, very long time, that primarily the NDP have been trying to—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Thunder Bay seems intent on bringing information into the Legislature that has nothing to do with what's going on in Ontario. He's actually talking about—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member knows that that is not a point of order. Thank you.

Continue, please.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you very much. I appreciate that. I know that they don't like to be reminded about Stephen Harper supporting the single sales tax.

1730

But on the forestry piece, I think it's—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Just to inform the House, the government has time-allocated this motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** That's not a point of order.

The member can continue, please.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you very much, Speaker. And so, unfortunately, it has primarily been the NDP misleading and giving false hope to the people of the province of Ontario affected by the forestry crisis; primarily the NDP, but even more so, unfortunately, the Conservatives, as they attempt to gain a little traction before an election.

Here's one simple thing I always tell people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan to ask the NDP and ask

the Conservatives when they talk about forestry and electricity prices. They like to try and link the two: What a ridiculously false argument that has been for seven years. It never affected sawmilling in the first place. But you know what? Sawmills and pulp and paper mills started closing in the province of Ontario, as well as the rest of the country—they were closing in the rest of the country in 2004-05. They began closing; the forestry crisis began to hit. We'd been in government in 2004, as I say to my constituents, for like a year. So the member across the way is going to tell the people in Thunder Bay–Atikokan what happened to electricity prices in one year that could possibly have led to the closure of a sawmill or a pulp and paper mill. Their argument has been so blatantly false for so long that it has been remarkable to me that they have maintained the argument. They can't sell it, but they will continue to try. I appreciate it. They will continue to try to sell that ridiculously false argument.

Here's another piece that I like to ask people about when I'm speaking to them in Thunder Bay–Atikokan when it comes to the HST. I tell them, "Ask the NDP and ask the Conservatives to explain to you when the last time is that those two parties agreed on tax policy." If you need any evidence to assure yourself that there is tremendous political opportunity being taken advantage of on the single sales tax, try not to smile when you're talking to them and ask them to explain how it is that the Conservatives—who, I've got to say, are a pretty right-leaning group for the most part; I think there's a bit of a divided caucus over there, but for the most part certainly their leader and one of the gentlemen over there in the House today are very right-leaning—and a group on the left, who are definitely left; I'm not sure how far left. The two of them agree on tax policy. To my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I ask them to ask yourself: When is the last time that happened? How do you explain that, on the opposite ends of the political continuum, the Conservatives and the NDP agree that the HST is a bad idea? It's quite remarkable. I wonder if it might just have a little bit more to do with political opportunity than anything else. I think it's pretty clear what's going on here, but try they will.

I have only about two and a half minutes left. I want to make a couple of comments on what has usually been spoken about in the House when it comes to renewables. We saw last week the leader of the official opposition make his comments about, if he had the privilege of being the Premier, he'd cancel the \$7-billion Samsung deal. I guess he just chose that language so that people in the province would think \$7 billion represents a cost to them when in fact the \$7 billion is a private sector investment into the province of Ontario. That's what the \$7 billion is. That's how much they're committed to investing in province of Ontario—16,000 or 20,000 jobs already created in the green energy sector.

On the front page of the Thunder Bay paper today, when I flew down from Thunder Bay, there was a wonderful big picture of a 100-year-old church, St. Andrew's



Presbyterian Church, right down by city hall in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan: a big front-page picture of them with solar panels. A 100-year-old church just entered into a 20-year FIT contract to generate—I forget the amount of energy they're going to create. This is another example of what the Conservative leader has decided he will cancel.

I have a lot of people in my riding who are concerned very much about the fact that he continues to talk about cancelling green energy programs. I've got two coal plants. We're the only party that committed to converting them. I've got two in my riding we're going to convert; 230 people are going to keep their jobs and about \$300 million worth of construction to convert both those plants. That sounds like a green energy project to me, but I guess perhaps the Conservatives don't support that either.

The other thing they're doing on renewables is, of course, trying to link this incredible transformation that's happening in our energy sector to price increases on their hydro bills. The reality of it is that all of the renewables, once they're on stream—and they're not all on stream now—will represent about 10% to 13%—I forget the exact number—of the total produced capacity of energy in the province. The total produced capacity from renewables contemplated right now will be about 10% to 13%. They will not have a marginal impact.

Now, the opposition has an opportunity to tell us what they're going to do on energy. They haven't yet. We have rebuilt 5,000 kilometres of transmission line. We've brought thousands of megawatts of new energy on to the system. We need it. We don't know how they're going to do it. Apparently they have some magic way of investing in a system that requires the investment and not increasing people's energy bills. Perhaps they will have an opportunity to explain that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to debate this interesting government motion this afternoon. Maybe before I start on that, I should just correct the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I'm sure he didn't realize that he was mistaken when he mentioned the member from Nepean—Carleton and her reading a list of items that the HST applied to. She was actually reading a list of items that the sneaky eco tax brought in on July 1 applied to. I happen to have it here. It applies to thousands and thousands and thousands of varied objects, so I just correct the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

To today's motion, it is certainly an interesting one. It is certainly quite political. It goes on and on about all the wonderful things that the government is doing and wants us to believe that are actually happening. Then, towards the end of the motion, it says, "Rejects the introduction of a carbon tax as a measure that would hurt Ontario's economic growth; and

"Rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians the

most, take \$3 billion out of health care and education funding and harm Ontario's economic recovery." So a very political motion for sure this afternoon.

Like my colleague from Nepean—Carleton, I want to start out by reading a quote from Premier McGuinty from April 4, 2011, in Hansard. He said, "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." Let's talk about Premier's McGuinty's record because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds for Ontario if he is re-elected in October. Before the 2003 election, Premier McGuinty said he would not raise taxes but he wouldn't lower them as well.

I remember seeing that. I didn't know the Premier that well at that point, but I watched him on TV and saw him signing a declaration with a flourish. I took him at his word and I thought, "I guess he's not a tax-and-spend Liberal; maybe he's not as bad as I'm worried he might be, that he might take the province's economic fortunes and flush them down the toilet and get us into a really bad situation." I think a lot of other people in the province of Ontario believed him as well.

In fact, he did go on and sign a pledge. Let's me read that pledge into the record. It read, "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters...." That is pretty clear. He signed it. He did it on TV. That's pretty darned clear. We all remember, of course, after that the commercials, the ones that he ran more than 200 times during the election campaign. I would think that if he's running 200 election ads, that is maybe something you expect him to fulfill after he's elected.

1740

We all know what the Premier did after he got the keys to the Premier's office: He brought in the health tax. It's the single largest income tax grab in the history of Ontario, taking \$3 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario families.

My colleague read some of the charts into the record earlier today. Let me just give an illustration of how the health tax works. If you make \$20,000 a year, you pay \$60 in extra health taxes. So, if you get a 5% increase in your wages so you get \$21,000 a year, the Premier—he's so greedy—would double your health tax to \$120. You work harder, and Premier McGuinty taxes you more.

Also, if you make \$25,000 a year, just \$4,000 more, you pay \$300 in health taxes. That's a 500% increase if you have the good fortune to make \$480 a week. That's almost an entire week's salary. Looking at the chart, you can pay as much as \$900 in health tax. One individual can pay as much as \$900.

That was 2003. That's what he did after he wrote on a pledge that he wouldn't raise taxes.

Then, 2007 rolls around—another election. In that election, he denied that he would raise taxes. When told by his critics that the critics wouldn't believe him, he said, "They're wrong, they're wrong, they're wrong." That's pretty definitive, again.



After the vote, after the 2007 election, he was successful and, with no warning, he broke his promise again and brought in the \$3-billion HST tax grab. So there's now HST on hydro bills, of course, we know, and hydro bills are skyrocketing.

On the very same day, on July 1, 2010, that the McGuinty government brought in the HST, as cover, they brought in the eco taxes on more than 9,000 items that Ontario families use every day. I'm not going to read the whole thing because I don't have time to read the whole thing, but it was on things like a sharpening kit, a level—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock, please. There's a lot of chatter across the aisle, and it's difficult to hear the member speak. Let's give him the floor, please.

The member from Parry Sound—Muskoka again.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The list of items on the eco tax—things like a torch kit, butane, a clock radio—I've heard situations where people have bought a clock radio that was valued at \$9.95 and the eco tax was \$2.75 that they snuck in, and they didn't try to tell people how it might make a difference. In fact, I don't think it would make a difference. They've since temporarily retracted that one.

We hear the struggles from Ontario families every day as they face these increased taxes, but it didn't end there. Thanks to the McGuinty government, Ontario families are faced with increased taxes through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes, just to name a few.

I recall when the diamond tax was coming in—here we had the first diamond mine ever in Ontario, west of Attawapiskat, Ontario. The government was a little sneaky on that one too. De Beers invested millions and millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, developing this new mine. They were partway through developing the mine, and the government changed the rules. They doubled the diamond tax. In fact, I remember being here at a meet-the-miner reception here at Queen's Park. It's usually a friendly sort of event, and the representatives used that opportunity to say how devastating this would be where they changed the rules midway through the game and how it would scare investment away and jobs away from Ontario.

Actually, when the leader of our party, Tim Hudak, was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Ontario was the number one jurisdiction in the world to invest in for the mining sector. Unfortunately, we're far down the list now under the McGuinty government.

Going on with some of these new taxes to establish this pattern that the government has brought in—of course, they've brought in the harmonized sales tax. That's about \$3.1 billion a year. They brought in the Ontario health tax. That's about \$3.1 billion. They've increased business taxes; about \$1.2 billion. Of course, the debt retirement charge on hydro bills—it should be paid off by now—is \$931 million a year. Income tax

hikes of \$900 million; property tax hikes, \$450 million; the hidden hydro tax, \$53 million; eco fees, \$39.4 million; electronic taxes, \$71 million; the tire tax, \$70 million.

Last week the McGuinty Liberals had a chance to reject tax increases. We had a motion on the floor, but they voted that down. You might ask, why is that? Because they're keeping their options open.

Then, on Wednesday, the finance minister said that a McGuinty government will not raise or lower taxes. You may have heard that before. They've established a clear pattern. Before an election, they state very clearly they won't raise taxes. The election happens and, all of a sudden, in comes some form of new tax.

The question this time around might be, what new tax might they be thinking about increasing? We do know that the government is running a substantial deficit. In fact, a recent article by Martin Regg Cohn entitled "Ontario's Scary Debt Numbers" stated, "Behind closed doors, however, the province's financial brain trust has been shown a different slide show"—they were talking about the Premier's slide show where he's been going around the province creating a very rosy picture of the government's finances—"one that casts the rapidly rising debt in a darker light: As the debt burden has soared, Ontario has fallen embarrassingly behind most other provinces.

"The Premier's smooth messaging and selective PowerPointing can't sugar-coat the grim data that the province's number crunchers are sharing among themselves. Digging itself out of debt won't be nearly as easy for Ontario as McGuinty makes out in public."

He goes on, illustrating this: "The most daunting numbers compare Ontario's finances in 2003-04, when the McGuinty government took power, to the present day. Back then, Ontario's debt was a healthier 28% of GDP—with only the western provinces doing better.

"In 2010-11 the roles are reversed, with Ontario saddled by debt that has reached 36% of GDP—higher than any province except Nova Scotia and Quebec. On a per capita basis, Ontario is borrowing more debt than any province except New Brunswick..."

That's an article illustrating Ontario's scary debt numbers, and that's a predictor of why we can see this pattern of election and then tax increase happening again, because the government has greatly ramped up spending since 2003 and they continue to do so.

We know that this past year they had a \$17-billion deficit, they're looking a \$16-billion deficit this year and it continues in double digits for many years. In their own budget, if you read what they're talking about, "Effective Management of Debt," what do they say? "Increased debt leads to increased borrowing costs, which squeezes the overall amount of funding available for future health care, education and social programs. Accordingly, it is important to manage the levels and cost of government borrowing."

This year the Ontario government is spending some \$10.2 billion on interest payments to service the debt, and they're predicting that number, as they keep adding more



and more debt, to go up to some \$16 billion in just a few short years. That's more and more money that they're spending. They have not been able to restrain spending. We saw two years ago in the budget where they declared that they were going to have a freeze, and the only freeze we've seen is in the non-unionized part of the government workforce, but the great, vast majority of the workforce has seen increases. In fact, we learned last week about a secret 1% increase that conveniently happens beyond the next provincial election for 38,000 OPSEU workers. What do you think that does to the negotiations with all the other unions when you've got a secret side deal that nobody is supposed to know about? In fact, the government lawyer went to court trying to maintain its secrecy.

1750

The government has not been able to restrain spending. If they're not able to restrain spending—they keep coming up with new ways to spend money—what's the other option? There is only one other option other than continuing to run these huge, huge, huge deficits, and that is to bring in new taxes. That's why we say that based on the track record of the government, they're very likely to bring in new taxes.

Look at the debt: They're on track to double the debt of the province of Ontario. They had a \$16.7-billion deficit last year, \$16.3 billion planned for this year, \$15 billion the year after, \$13.3 billion the year after that. But that doesn't give the total picture of all the borrowing. The government actually borrowed some \$39.9 billion last year. They're greatly piling up the debt of the province of Ontario. How are they going to pay for their spending, which they haven't been able to control? With future taxes.

Just today there was an article on the fact the government is changing the funding for municipalities. I had an article here, which I think I've lost now, to do with the OLG changing the accounting system so that municipalities which were supposed to get 5% of the slot machine revenue would no longer get as much as they had in the past. I know one mayor is quoted in that article as stating that he just sees this as "another tax grab."

The government has a very clear track record. I just think that there's a lack of credibility here. I note that economists Neils Veldhuis and Charles Lammam are measuring the fiscal performance of Canada's Premiers. They are emphatic in their position that Ontario's 2011 budget just isn't believable. They were troubled by Mr. Duncan's rhetoric when he said, "Our government has a strong track record of fiscal prudence and discipline," or when he described his plan to tackle Ontario's deficit as a "prudent, proven and responsible approach ... to the challenge of the deficit."

Since being elected in 2003, Premier Dalton McGuinty has proven he is grossly inadequate in managing

Ontario's finances. In the recent report by the Fraser Institute, *Measuring the Fiscal Performance of Canada's Premiers*, Premier McGuinty was found to have performed the worst among 10 provincial Premiers at managing the government's spending, tax policies, deficits and debt.

In keeping with his reputation as a spendaholic, the Premier's deficit reduction plan allows deficits to continue until 2017 and 2018, and plans to add another \$67.5 billion in debt due to deficits from the current fiscal year through to 2017-18. In fact, as the Fraser Institute economists point out, Mr. McGuinty's plan means that provincial debt will swell to 40.6% of gross domestic product in 2014-15, from 29% in 2008-09.

Rather than cut spending, the McGuinty government is counting on restrained spending growth at an annual rate of 2% and higher revenues. As much as I'd like to believe that, there is no foundation in fact for this assumption. Mr. McGuinty has never, ever held spending down. In fact, spending has increased, since 2003 when he was first elected, some 76%. It was about \$70 billion in 2003 and they're planning on spending \$124 billion this year.

As I just have a couple of minutes left, let me just come to a conclusion. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has pointed out it took 23 Premiers 136 years to accumulate Ontario's first \$148 billion in debt. Premier McGuinty will single-handedly double that number in his eight years in office.

Now, before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Premier McGuinty are making promises—let me again read that quote from Premier McGuinty from April 4, 2011, from Hansard: "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." That is why Ontario families don't want pledges or promises this time. They don't want them because they simply do not believe Premier McGuinty will keep his word. They want a guarantee. When it comes to taxes, there's only one guarantee the Premier will give them: He'll raise taxes. He can't help it; it's what he does.

An Ontario PC government will take a different approach: We will not raise taxes. An Ontario PC government will lower taxes across the board, and finally give Ontario families the respect they deserve and the relief they need.

I'm sure other speakers from our party will go on to illustrate further concerns. It's just been a pleasure this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It being just before 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands recessed until 6:45 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1756 to 1845.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
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<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

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Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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<b>Murdoch, Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
<b>O'Toole, John (PC)</b>	Durham	
<b>Oraziotti, David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	
<b>Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)</b>	Oshawa	
<b>Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)</b>	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
<b>Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
<b>Ramal, Khalil (LIB)</b>	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Ramsay, David (LIB)</b>	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
<b>Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)</b>	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)</b>	Davenport	
<b>Sandals, Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	
<b>Savoline, Joyce (PC)</b>	Burlington	
<b>Sergio, Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	
<b>Shurman, Peter (PC)</b>	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
<b>Sterling, Norman W. (PC)</b>	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
<b>Tabuns, Peter (NDP)</b>	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
<b>Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)</b>	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Yakubski, John (PC)</b>	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day



*Continued from back cover*

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5971
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5971
Mr. Dave Levac.....	5971
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5971
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	5971
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5971

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Dairy farmers**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5971
-------------------------	------

### **The Children's Storefront**

Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	5971
---------------------------	------

### **Han Park**

Mr. Reza Moridi.....	5972
----------------------	------

### **North Grenville Public Library**

Mr. Steve Clark .....	5972
-----------------------	------

### **Buddha's Light vegetarian food fair**

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5972
-----------------------	------

### **Gasoline tax**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5972
-----------------------	------

### **Andrew Fleck Child Care Services**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5973
-----------------------	------

### **Bladder cancer**

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5973
-----------------------------	------

### **Oakville arts and culture**

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	5973
------------------------------	------

## **MOTIONS**

### **Committee sittings**

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5973
-----------------------------	------

Motion agreed to .....	5974
------------------------	------

### **House sittings**

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5974
-----------------------------	------

Motion agreed to .....	5974
------------------------	------

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **Banning Collusion in Electoral Advertising Act, 2011, Bill 195, Mr. Arnott / Loi de 2011 interdisant**

### **la collusion dans le cadre de la publicité électorale, projet de loi 195, M. Arnott**

First reading agreed to .....	5974
-------------------------------	------

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5974
----------------------	------

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Dog ownership**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5974
-------------------------	------

### **Éducation en français**

M. Michael Prue .....	5974
-----------------------	------

### **Correctional facilities**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5975
------------------------	------

### **Éducation en français**

M. Rosario Marchese .....	5975
---------------------------	------

### **Environmental protection**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5975
-----------------------	------

### **Éducation en français**

Mme France Gélinas .....	5976
--------------------------	------

### **Photo identification**

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5976
-----------------------	------

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5976
-----------------------	------

### **Services en français**

Mme France Gélinas .....	5976
--------------------------	------

### **Taxation**

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5977
-----------------------	------

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

### **Time allocation**

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5977
-----------------------------	------

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5977
-------------------------	------

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5980
--------------------------	------

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5983
------------------------	------

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	5985
-------------------------	------

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5985
-------------------------	------

Vote deferred.....	5988
--------------------	------

### **Taxation**

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5988
-----------------------------	------

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast.....	5988
-----------------------------	------

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5990
------------------------	------

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	5999
-------------------------	------

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	6009
----------------------	------

Mr. Norm Miller.....	6012
----------------------	------

Debate deemed adjourned.....	6014
------------------------------	------

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 16 May 2011 / Lundi 16 mai 2011

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ted McMeekin .....	5959
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5959
Hon. Carol Mitchell .....	5959
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	5959
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	5959
Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....	5959
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5959
Mr. Steve Clark .....	5959
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	5959
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5959
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5959
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	5959
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	5959
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5959
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	5959
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	5959
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	5959
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5960
Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	5960
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5960
M. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....	5960
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5960
Mme France Gélinas .....	5960
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5960
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	5960
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5960

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Energy policies

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5960
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5960

### Energy policies

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5961
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5962

### Freedom of information

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5962
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5962

### Freedom of information

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5963
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5963

### Energy policies

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5964
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5964

### Education funding

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5964
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5964

### Energy policies

Mr. Ted McMeekin .....	5965
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5965

### Energy policies

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5965
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	5966

### Employment practices

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5966
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5966

### Family health teams

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	5967
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5967

### Forest industry

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	5967
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5967

### Forest industry

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5968
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5968

### Education funding

Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	5968
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5969

### Tendering process

Mr. Frank Klees .....	5969
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	5969

### Labour relations

Mme France Gélinas .....	5969
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5970

### Taxation

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5970
Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5970

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	5971
Mr. Reza Moridi .....	5971
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5971

*Continued on inside back cover*





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L'honorable Steve Peters**Greffière**  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 May 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 mai 2011

*The House recessed from 1756 to 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TAXATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 16, 2011, on the motion by Ms. Smith concerning taxation and the provincial economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is always a pleasure to see you in the chair, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on attending question period as our Speaker this morning. You did very well.

I would now like to add a few of my thoughts about motion number 74, the Ontario tax plan for jobs and growth. Basically, at the outset, I, like all of my colleagues from the New Democrats, oppose the HST and want to focus on practical solutions to make life affordable for Ontario families and to ensure public service that works for the people of Ontario.

What we can see through this motion, tabled by Minister Duncan, is that the McGuinty government is becoming more out of touch with Ontario families, who are having a hard time making ends meet. We saw that Prime Minister Harper, who is Conservative, brought in the HST. The Conservatives in this House have supported private power schemes, which can also be blamed for the sky-high bills. New Democrats want to offer a few practical changes.

If we take a look at corporate taxes—or corporate tax giveaways, as I like to call them—corporate profits have increased by 7.9% during this last quarter. This is \$66 billion. That's really good news if you happen to be a CEO or a shareholder, but it raises serious questions about the economic usefulness of the McGuinty government's multibillion-dollar corporate tax cuts.

Ontario's record on post-recession job creation isn't as strong as other provinces. If we compare ourselves to Manitoba to the left, which has put a pause on further tax cuts while their provincial budgets are in deficit, Ontario remains nearly 16,000 jobs below its pre-recession peak, while Manitoba has gained an extra 15,000 jobs since the date the recession took hold.

I get a real sense of where this corporate tax cut is going. It helps to look at one sector of Ontario's economy and see what they've done with the additional revenue.

The Ontario government says that the corporate tax cut will hand \$535 million to banks and give \$135 million to insurance companies, and that's on top of the \$520 million provided to banks through the elimination of the capital tax. In total, of the \$4 billion in corporate and capital tax cuts the government has announced, \$1.2 billion of that money will be pocketed by banks and insurance companies, the vast majority going to just eight companies which dominate Ontario's financial sector.

Put this into perspective versus the 13 million Ontarians who happen to live here. Over the last year, employment in the same sector—banking and insurance companies—has decreased by 25,000 jobs. So it doesn't matter that we are giving those big corporations massive tax cuts; it doesn't lead to job growth. It led to 25,000 fewer jobs in those two sectors. If the money didn't go to create jobs, where did it go?

#### 1850

I will read from a table that tells the story. Profits have increased significantly. CEOs have been awarded significant compensation increases. Dividends for shareholders have been boosted, but the hiring spree has not materialized. If we take them one by one and look at Scotiabank, Scotiabank's quarterly profit increased by 19% and now stands at \$1.2 billion. For his hard work, the CEO gets \$10.6 million annually and his pay increased by 10%.

Name me any worker category in Ontario whose pay went up by 10% last year. I can't think of any. If I look at nurses, they didn't get 10%; teachers didn't get 10%; firefighters maybe didn't get 10%; EMS; people working in the mines—no workers in Ontario got a 10% increase in their wages last year, but the CEO of Scotiabank did.

Let's look at the Royal Bank. The Royal Bank quarterly profit, thanks in part to the corporate tax cut that we have given them, has increased by 23% and now stands at \$1.8 billion. What did their CEO get? Their CEO got an increase in pay of 6% and now pockets \$11 million a year in salary. This \$11 million a year is made possible in part because the McGuinty government has cut corporate taxes.

Let's go down to the TD Bank. The TD Bank quarterly profit increased by 19%. Those are phenomenal numbers. It now stands at \$1.5 billion in quarterly profit. Their CEO's salary went up 8% for the last 12 months and now stands at \$11.3 million a year, thanks in part to the corporate tax cuts we are giving these banks. You know, it's hard to make ends meet with \$11.3 million a year, I suppose. I couldn't even dream of it.

The Bank of Montreal's quarterly profit increased by 18% and now stands at \$776 million for a quarter. Their

CEO's yearly salary went up by a whopping 28%. He now makes a measly \$9.5 million a year. It's a good thing we gave them corporate tax cuts, because at \$9.5 million a year it's hard to make ends meet.

Then we have the CIBC. The CIBC's quarterly profit increased by 19% in the last quarter. Their quarterly income is now \$799 million. Their CEO's salary went up—it's a good thing you're sitting down, Madam Speaker, because you could fall off—by 50% and he or she now makes \$9.3 million a year.

Where do those numbers come from? How can anybody's pay from 2010 to 2011 go up 50%?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** José Bautista.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, yes. One of my fellow members is talking about a baseball player here.

Let's look at Sun Life Financial because it's not only banks, it's also insurance companies that we are giving these big corporate tax cuts to. Their profit increased 100%. It's a good thing we gave them that tax cut because, you know, a 100% increase now stands at \$1.79 billion, \$1.8 billion profit in a quarter. That is in a three-month period. Why do we need to give these people more money? I don't understand this at all. But they thank their CEO for this, and they thank him handsomely because they gave him a 100% increase in his salary. He now makes \$8.3 million a year.

Let's look at Manulife Financial. Their profit went up—sorry, that was Sun Life before. Their profit went up 100%, and they pay their CEO \$9.3 million a year.

Great-West Life, their profit—that's quarterly profit—is at \$508 million and went up 20% for the last quarter.

Those numbers speak for themselves. Those numbers tell us that these people have not created any jobs. In fact, we've lost 25,000 jobs in the banking and financial sectors. What this has done is it has taken money away from the provincial government to do other things.

It's rather interesting, when you read their budget. I was interested by page 206—page 206 of the French version. I don't know what page it is in the English version, but I'm sure it must be close. On page 206 of the French version, you look at how much was spent for programming. We can see that for 2010-11, for programs—that's the programs that the government offered—they have spent \$113.3 billion on programs for the people of Ontario. They now have this nifty little chart that shows us what they plan to spend for 2011-12 etc., and they go all the way to 2017-18. So when we look at this, we look at the programs that are \$113.3 billion, and their projection for the future is that it will rise to \$124.9 billion. This is how they intend to balance our budget; remember, they're saying that they are going to put forward a balanced budget and this will happen by the year 2017-18.

So between now, the numbers we have from 2010, to 2017—you know, I'm strong in math, so I did a little calculation myself and saw that basically the program expense growth that we had been told was supposed to be a 1.9% increase over that period of time really turns out to be a 1.6% increase in the program expense growth. It's

a low growth, but let's look at this in a little bit more detail.

Let's look at population growth. We know that with most of the programs that we offer, whether we look at health care or long-term care or schools or policing, the more people who live in Ontario, the more money it will cost. I don't wish any harm on anybody, but we all know if there are more people in Ontario, then more people will get sick and more people will need our health care system etc. So in this little book there, they project population growth to be at about 1.2% a year. If you take the 1.6% that they intend to increase the programming expenses by, to go from \$113 billion to \$124.9 billion, and you take that 1.6% and deduct from this the 1.2% a year growth in the population of Ontario, you are really left with a 0.4% increase that would be available for increases in programs.

If you look at what you have to take into account when you look at program expenses, in health care, the first thing you have to take into account is the impact of the aging population. I went to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' *How Sustainable is Medicare?* Marc Lee is the author of this report. He basically thinks that aging, right now—he did a study looking from 1975 to 2006 and published a report in 2007, and showed that aging accounts for about 0.8% of growth in health care expenditures just because we're living to be older, thank God, and living longer. He also looked at inflation just within the health care system. Inflation within the health care system has been at 2.5%, so the money we spend on health care, even if we did not do anything different from what we're doing now, is going to cost us 2.5% more just because of inflation.

#### 1900

Then you look at what he calls "enrichment." Basically, enrichment is things like technologies that enable us to care for the elderly. You look at the demands for knee and hip replacement as one example. You look at new technologies, the demand for MRIs, CT scans and PET scans. You look at the price of drugs and the number of drugs that people are on. You also have to look at end-of-life treatment, which tends to be a part of our health care system.

So you see, if we do nothing else but what we're doing now in health care alone, we're looking at a total increase of 6.3% every single year. If we do nothing more—not one more MRI, not one more anything that we do now—it's going to cost us 6.3% more in program spending. I took health care because it happens that 50% of the programming expenses are in health care.

Remember, I took the chart on page 206. How much are they planning so that we can balance the budget? They're planning to increase the program expenses by 1.6% a year. They're planning a 1.2% increased growth in population. That leaves us 0.4% a year. To maintain health care the way it is now, we need 6.3%. So there's a big gap between those two.

I spent quite a bit of time reading this lengthy manual, and there's nowhere in there that explained how the



magic of 6.3% historical data from 1975 to 2006 will suddenly be changed into 0.4% a year. How you pay for new services, inflation, population aging, population growth, wait increases with the 0.4% per year once you take out population growth—we need to have a conversation here, because those numbers are not adding up. They're not adding up at all.

What will that mean? That means that this \$4.7-billion tax giveaway we're giving to the rich corporations, to those poor CEOs only making between \$8.3 million and \$11.3 million a year, those poor people there—why are we giving those people \$4.7 billion of our money when, to just balance the books by 2017—we're not even talking this year or next year, we're talking 2017, to balance the books by 2017.

We could put that money to better use. We could put that money for programs and services that will need some increases just to stay where we are now. We're not even talking about doing better. We're not even talking about having a PET scan in Sudbury or having a breast coil attached to our MRI machines so we can take advantage of those new breast screenings that are being talked about for the rest of Ontario. The women in northeastern Ontario won't get access to those because we don't have a breast coil for our MRI machine.

We have the Angels in Pink, who have done their second fundraising. They've raised \$20,000 toward the \$200,000 that it presently costs to bring a breast coil to the existing MRI machine at Sudbury Regional Hospital. I would certainly like to see the wiggle room in there to bring that kind of technology so that we have equitable access for the people of northeastern Ontario.

I was really happy when I heard that there will be an expansion of the breast screening program for the women of Ontario but very sad to think, here again, here is a new program that is available, that is proactive to help women detect cancer early, but this program won't be available to the women of the northeast because we don't have the technology, very much similar to the campaign from Sam Bruno for PET scanning for Sudbury Regional Hospital. We were all happy when the government of Ontario decided to cover PET scanning for the people of Ontario under specific rules. But then again, if it doesn't exist in Sudbury Regional Hospital, it is not available to the people of northeastern Ontario.

Am I right in thinking that I'm done? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm going to share my time with the member from Ottawa—Orléans. Like the member opposite—I'm always terrible, I have to admit, for ridings. As I was listening to the member for Nickel Belt and chatting briefly with my neighbour, I was surprised as well to look at the clock and find her time had run out so quickly.

I'm going to spend the few minutes I have talking about a couple of things. Particularly, it seems to me at times of late in this place that the official opposition lives

in an alternate universe. I'm not quite sure what that universe is but I think probably their trip on Friday was the blue haze that they did in 20-odd or 60-odd ridings. As a matter of fact, I think the haze was more like smoke. And I think they were blowing some today and of late.

I want to talk a little bit about what's happening out there in the world, because it's easy for the opposition to stand up and bemoan everything we are doing even when in principle they will agree with the very policies that we are putting in place. I often hear the Premier talking about the ship of state not veering too far to the left or the right, trying to keep a centre course. Occasionally you change course a little bit because you have to adopt policy accordingly. I think sometimes, though, when I watched the opposition when they were in government, it was listing. It wasn't steering. The ship was listing to the right and the water was running over the gunnels; it was flooding in at times.

So I'm not unhappy if we at times maybe veer a little to the left to address some of the social policies that we need to address as a government—not all the social policies obviously that every member would like and maybe not to the extent that our friends from the third party would like, but that's okay. That's a policy difference. Sometimes we veer to the right a bit. And that's okay because it certainly meets the economic climate and needs, finds that balance, but not as far to the right as the opposition has had us in the past and clearly would like to take us post October of this year. And make no mistake in the direction that party is going.

We only need look at what happened in Carleton—Mississippi Mills, where the sitting member, with over 30 years in this place—as the member from Peterborough likes to say, they threw him under the bus. So it's clear where they're going. They've got a policy, I understand, a pretty open policy that they don't like to interfere with the nomination process. I don't think they interfere even to the point of supporting the dean of the Legislature. Having said that, there was a candidate in my riding. Unfortunately, he ran into some legal trouble—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock. A point of order from the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The tenor of the gentleman's debate has nothing to do with the motion before this House whatsoever. He is in fact impugning another member or members of this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. It's not a point of order.

The member it will continue and come back to the motion, please.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I will, Speaker. I'm trying to be there in the context of our economic policies. I am simply drawing to the attention of the House how sometimes we move a bit to the right to address the economic climate and how our policies often will line up particularly with those of their federal cousins, our Prime Minister and the federal finance minister. We have moved in the direction, with the harmonization of our joint sales taxes, the GST and the PST, to a single sales tax.



1910

That's something that the Prime Minister wanted when he was in a minority government situation and now as the leader of a majority in the House in Ottawa, and certainly the former finance minister of this place was a very, very strong advocate. I recall being in a meeting where we were asking him about—not just us; there were others from across the country. I was there on behalf of our finance minister, asking about support for universities and colleges, because we see that as a priority. I recall his comments being, "So you want us back in the business of colleges and universities? You want us to be doing that for you?" We obviously have ownership for that, but part of it was, "When you guys line up on sales tax, then we can talk about some other things." So we found ourselves moved to the right to meet our objectives in areas like post-secondary education and health and those types of things and to make the business climate better.

But I digress from where my earlier comments were, and only marginally so.

I know in my riding the official opposition now has a candidate who will certainly fill the void, if there is one, of a hard-leaning right position.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Is that Mr. Farouk?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** No, it's not. It's a former executive director of the Ontario and federal taxpayers' coalition. He leans about as far right as you can get. He's even farther right than some of the members who are sitting over there today.

But I did say that in the little bit of time I had that I wanted to talk about some of the things that are happening that may bring some sense of reality for those people who are not in this place and don't necessarily take what we do here—I wouldn't say "seriously," but don't take what we do here as what makes the world turn some days.

I want to just pick up on a couple of clippings in this week's paper that speak to investments and what that means. I found a couple that I found interesting as I was reading.

"Greening the Education Landscape" is from the Sunday Sun. It speaks to colleges and universities, what's happening in the education system that's preparing young people, and how they are responding to the needs of a green economy. I'm going to just quote a couple of pieces, if I can, and I'll give this to Hansard later, since I don't have extensive notes. This will be available, obviously; they may be able to access this readily anyway.

Part of the column talks about the Green Energy Act, and it says, "It promises to expedite the growth of clean, renewable sources of energy like wind, solar, hydro, biomass and biogas while also promoting a culture of conservation." That's talking about the Green Energy Act. "Durham College"—and while Durham College is not in my riding, many of my constituent students go there. It's in Durham region. We think of it kind of as a home college, along with Centennial College in Scarborough. "Durham College is responding by launching

several new programs: energy management and sustainable building technology, construction carpentry and energy audit techniques. 'They're all focused on green—green building technologies, green energy systems.'"

Now, it wasn't that long ago that those programs would have had no place in the college system; no one would have envisioned those being in the college system. It's because of things like the Green Energy Act and the move to a green economy that we're finding opportunities for young people to be directly engaged in getting prepared for the new economies.

They talk a bit about new careers for a green economy, and, "Green programs are helping to drive the province's transition to a sustainable economy," says Colleges Ontario."

That is just one outcome of our investments, part of our tax plan for growth, one outcome of our investments in education in the green economy. You know, we get the chance to read the clippings here daily in our bit of spare time we have available to us, and since part of my riding—half of my riding is in Toronto, and Toronto is not all of Ontario, but it's a pretty big chunk when you look at the population of the GTA and you look at its economic clout.

There was quite a good article on Toronto. It says, "Forget Paris—Toronto is Where It's At." PricewaterhouseCoopers did this research on some 26 major cities internationally. They ranked them on a variety of quadrants, and Toronto is not number one in every category by any means, but when they do a composite look at Toronto, they say Toronto is probably the second best among the 26 cities in the world that they reference in which to live, work, invest, grow economies and raise families. Among the kinds of things they were commenting on—it says that Toronto tied with Mumbai on the overall sustainability list. They looked at sustainable economies, and we're the top city for tackling air pollution and rated high in waste recycling. It says Toronto was competitive but outmuscled by the likes of Singapore, Madrid, Hong Kong, New York, Paris and London in the financial sector. You know, those big players in the financial sector—we can't necessarily compete with London and Paris and Hong Kong, but we're right up there, even though a small city, in the financial sector.

Toronto was one of the top-ranked cities for its cost of living in the world.

Ease of doing business: The report says Toronto would be one of the easiest places in the world to do business if it improved its ease of hiring and firing and if Canada offered more flexibility on visa requirements. They ranked it fifth in the report.

Intellectual capital and innovation: I hope when the Minister of Research and Innovation has a chance to speak he may want to comment on what we are doing on the innovation front, but it speaks about intellectual capital and innovation and it ranks Toronto as being second.

If there's anywhere we really fall down in the report on the international front, it's in transportation and



infrastructure. It particularly says that limited transit coverage, the cost of public transit and an insufficient number of licensed taxis contribute to the low rating. We're ranked 13th out of 26 cities. It's the very reason why we are making the investments in infrastructure and in public transit in the massive ways that we have been doing. It's part of the means by which we are going to grow this economy. It's not just about the tax structure; it's about putting a tax structure in place that allows us to make investments in things like infrastructure. It allows us to make cities like Toronto—and Toronto, I think, is reflective in many ways of the rest of this province. It is not in isolation; it's not an island in and of itself. It allows us to look at our cities and say, "We've got good cities. We have good cities that are doing the right things when it comes to air quality; we have good cities when it comes to things like the cost of living, with job opportunities, with educational opportunities."

Do we have more work to do? Certainly, considerably more work, and I suggest that, on the transportation and transit front, reports like this point out the fact that we are not up to snuff with other international cities, and that's probably true in London and Ottawa and other cities throughout Ontario.

The reality is that our tax plan and our tax strategy, our growth-of-the-economy strategy, is not something that was thought up last night. It's not something that is part of one budget cycle. It has been an ongoing program for the last half-dozen or more years. I was fortunate to be in the finance area as the parliamentary assistant at a time when we managed to have—I think we had three balanced budgets in a row while I was there. The economy turned, and it changed the picture of the world, including Ontario. But the finance minister set out a strategy to get back to balance over a period of time that's achievable, and we haven't had to move those yardsticks at this point. Others have had to stretch their time frame out. We hear the federal government, our finance minister federally, saying they're going to shorten the time; they're going to get back to that four-year plan, I think they had, for balance by cutting out 90,000 federal public servants, with about a third of the federal public service gone to achieve that.

That's not the way we set out doing business here. We set out a time frame that is not only achievable, but achievable responsibly. I am optimistic—I wouldn't speak for the finance minister in any way, but I am optimistic, based on what I've heard from him and what I've seen in the context of this year's budget, that there may be a point where we say, you know, maybe that seven-year time frame to balance was just a fraction too long. He may find a way to bring us back a little bit on that, but I wouldn't want to suggest that's going to be the outcome at all at this point in time.

I'm pleased with the direction we've gone. I like the fact that we're prepared to move a bit to the left or a bit to the right, as the case might be, to meet the needs of Ontarians. I know at times it doesn't meet all of those needs. I'm glad we don't list so far over that the water

gushes over the gunnels and almost takes us under. I'm much happier with the course we have taken. This plan helps to get there.

Speaker, thank you so much for the time. I do want to share the time with the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We were in estimates last week with the Minister of Revenue, and she clearly showed with factual information that for families—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:**—it was entered in as evidence—up to \$150,000, they were better off under the new tax program. This is factual information. This is what Jack Mintz said would happen, that we would create 600,000 additional jobs because of the tax reform package in the next 10 years, that the earning power of Ontarians would go up 10%, and there would be \$47 billion of additional investment in Ontario. This is what's happening.

I think it's Michael Smart who has reported that the net impact of the reform for most families by the end of 2010 was a gain or a very small loss in after-tax real income. So it's the right thing to do, it's working, and I'm very pleased with that.

**1920**

One of the reasons, of course, that we did it is that out of over 140 other countries, 33 of the 34 of the OECD countries—the main leaders in economic leadership—have gone to this tax harmonization. We've done it, and when you get \$4.3 billion from the federal government, from Harper and Flaherty, because they recognize how important this is for Ontario, it's extremely important. And \$4.3 billion is almost \$1,000 per family in Ontario, if you do the math.

One thing that Ontario has done: From the bad days of 2000, when we were about \$2.1 billion—I was a consulting engineer then, and I know those figures. Do you know what we're investing in infrastructure this year? Some \$15.9 billion. Sure, the jobs came back in Ontario, 115% of the jobs, because we were there. The federal government put in \$1, but for every \$1 the federal government put in, we put in about \$5, five times as much. It kept the construction industry going, it renewed our infrastructure, and this was the right thing to do. If you look at the USA, they've got 17% of their jobs back; the UK has 44%; France has 53%; Ontario has 115%. Ontario was hit the hardest by that recession, and we brought it back with good economic planning.

The test scores: We're spending a lot in education, that's true, but the test scores are up from 54% to 68%. Our objective is 75%, because we have to have our kids getting the right start in life. Our post-secondary education in 2003 was 57% who were graduating; now 64% are doing post-secondary education, and we want to get it up to 70%, because the jobs of today require post-secondary training. High school graduation—all those kids who were left behind by the Tories for years: 68% were graduating in 2003, and you know where the rest



are ending up. They're ending up without jobs, they're ending up on welfare, they're ending up in our courts. We had 81%, a 13% increase in high school graduations. Our goal is 85%, because we believe in our kids and we're going to invest in our kids.

Shorter wait times in hospitals; cancer surgery down 30 days; cataract surgery, 189 days; hip replacement, 145 days; knee replacement, 240 days. I had a knee replacement and I waited over a year. It's down 240 days from that, because we believe in providing good health care. If you look at who has doctors in Ontario, it's 1.2 million more people than when we took over in 2003.

Creating new energy jobs: In 2010, that was 20,000 jobs. In 2011, we estimate 45,000 jobs; in 2012, 60,000 jobs. In green energy, we're the leaders in North America. We've got our industries going, and that's working out.

Let's look at cleaner air. We worry about our children; we worry about the diseases that come with it, including asthma. Nitrogen dioxide is down 21% since 2003; carbon monoxide, 14% since 2003; and sulphur dioxide down 28%.

I've always been very much an environmental person, because I know the costs of dirty air and dirty water. Walkerton shows what dirty water brought us. I want to speak to something that happened today, because I was maligned in this House today. I don't like that. I want to clear the record. The Conservatives fought us on the smoke-free act; they fought us all the way. They were in there with Big Tobacco. The Conservatives fought us on the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. We lost that in Ottawa. Conservatives were lined up with the big chemical companies who wanted to poison our water and poison our air. Since we brought in the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, two of the worst chemicals are down 80% in our urban streams. This is important. I proposed an amendment, supported by Wilkinson and others, to get cigarette advertising out of retail. The McNeely amendment got the cigarettes out of retail. You guys fought it all the way. The NDP supported us; you fought us. We got here to Ontario people like Cushman, and Bob Chiarelli, people who were leading to try to improve air quality, to improve water quality. We did it in Ottawa; we got the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. We only got it in Ontario and we fought you people all the way, but we had the power here with the NDP to get that bill through. Our water is much cleaner now in Ontario as a result.

We fought you all the way on coal. Getting rid of 25% of coal in Ontario costs a lot of money. It is not an easy thing to do. It took a lot of courage to go ahead with that. We're down to where about 80% of the coal generation is gone, and in 2014 it will be all gone. We'll be coal-free, and that's because the Liberal government wanted to do that.

We have done many things that are necessary, and when I say that Conservatives do not have any concern for children, I mean it, because you fought us on the way of giving—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Excuse me. I would ask the member to withdraw that last comment, please. I would ask the member from Ottawa—Orléans to withdraw that last comment, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw, you idiot.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** That guy should be thrown out of the House.

I withdraw.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** You know what you are.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to withdraw.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm going to get to this motion in a minute, but first I'm going to start with that member over there. How pathetic to stand in this House and repeat himself. It wasn't good enough that he made a fool of himself once, but he wants to stand here again and malign members on this side of the House and say that we don't care about children. Well, I say to you, come over here and say it and then tell my children that. You're pathetic.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** On a point of order, the member from York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** With all due respect, the member over there has a name and he's got a riding by which he should be addressed, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, please refer to his riding name.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I never referred to him as—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Point of order, government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is becoming very personal in his comments, and I would note that he has hurled insults towards our members more than once in the last five minutes. I would just ask, through you, Madam Speaker, that he temper his comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, continue, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I've been here for eight years and I've never considered this a personal place, but that member has made it that way.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you please refer to the member's riding?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** There's nothing in the standing orders—I'm pointing over there. That member. That member has made it a personal debate. He has stood here in his place and maligned members of the Progressive Conservative Party and insinuated more than once that they don't care about children. We may debate legislation and we may have different views on different points of law or how we're going to get somewhere, whether or not we take one method or another, but to stand here in this place and say that members on this side of the House



don't care about children is absolutely ridiculous. It's preposterous. It's below the dignity of this House. He should be ashamed of himself, and I'm certainly hopeful—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Peterborough, do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Yes. I refer to the standing orders, particularly 23(b).

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could we stop the clock for a second? I know it's late. I know tempers are rising. I know we're tired. I would ask all members, particularly the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, since he has the floor, to please come back to the motion at hand and to talk to the motion, and refrain from egregious pointing and name-calling. Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I am referencing what the member said previously in this debate. How it could be out of order, I have no idea. If he was allowed to speak about it, I would suggest that it would be appropriate that I be allowed to respond to it. That only stands to reason.

1930

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** To respond to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I called the member to order and asked him to apologize. He did. So back to the motion, please. Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. He withdrew; he did not apologize. There's a significant difference between a withdrawal and an apology. We don't expect an apology from him. I don't think he's capable of doing that, because he thinks he's right. But, you know, everything does happen in its time—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On a point of order, Speaker: You have called the member to order on 23(b)(i), on sticking to the topic under discussion, and he has in fact imputed motives to another member—23(i).

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has the floor. Continue, please. Please speak to the motion.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I rise on a point of order as well. I take it as a personal attack on myself, as a father with four children, that that member on the opposite side—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member from Lanark—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** He has absolutely no business being in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Ottawa–Orléans has already withdrawn the comment. That issue has been dealt with. It is now the floor for the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He will speak to the motion, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Like my colleague—we're going to get to the motion now—I want to start by reading a quote from Premier McGuinty from April 4, 2011, from Hansard. I quote: "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." Now, let's talk

about Premier McGuinty's record, because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds for Ontario if he is re-elected in October.

Before the 2003 election, Dalton McGuinty emphatically denied he would increase taxes, and on September 11, 2003, prior to that year's election, Dalton McGuinty signed a pledge. It was called the taxpayer protection promise. Let me read that pledge into the record. It reads as follows: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise that if my party is elected as the next government, I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the ... consent of Ontario voters...."

We all remember the commercials, the ones he ran more than 200 times during the election campaign. We all know that signing that pledge helped get Dalton McGuinty elected, and we all know what happened next. The minute he got the keys to the Premier's office—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What about being re-elected?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, I'm getting to that, Minister of Health.

The minute he got the keys to the Premier's office, Dalton McGuinty treated his word like it was nothing. He brought in the health tax. It was the single-largest income tax grab in the history of Ontario, taking \$3 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario families. And not a penny of that was dedicated to health care; it went into general revenues.

In 2007, he did it again. Before the 2007 election, he promised he would not raise taxes, but he would not lower them, either. When told that his critics wouldn't believe him, he said, "They're wrong. They're wrong. They're wrong." But after the vote, and with no warning, he broke his promise again and brought in the \$3-billion HST tax grab. HST on hydro bills is one of the reasons they are skyrocketing. On the very same day, July 1, 2010, Dalton McGuinty tried to use his HST as cover to sneak in the eco tax on more than 9,000 items Ontario families use every day.

We already know what his next permanent tax will be. Every year since 2002, Ontario families have paid the debt retirement charge on their hydro bills. It was created to pay off \$7.8 billion of debt going back to the Peterson era and the Darlington overruns. A typical family pays \$84 a year. It was supposed to be paid off in 2012. The government's own numbers say \$7.8 billion has been collected to date, and that was at the end of 2010. Without warning or explanation, the McGuinty Liberals announced that the debt retirement charge will be on the hydro bills of Ontario families until 2018, but they won't even tell Ontario families what the balance is. We asked the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. to tell us the balance; they also refused. It's like getting a credit card bill every month and being told to pay the interest with no idea how much the principal is. It's just plain wrong and it shows absolutely no respect for the families who are getting stuck with the bills.

To top it off, the McGuinty Liberals slapped the HST on to the bill, taking another \$80 million a year out of the



pockets of Ontario families. Families are already paying too much for hydro, thanks to the HST, the debt retirement charge, hydro rates up another 6% this year, \$18 million in the legal interest charges and expensive energy experiments that Premier McGuinty himself says will hike hydro bills by 46% during the next four years—and we think that is a lowball estimate. It's quite clear that the debt retirement charge under Dalton McGuinty will be a permanent tax, and we're hearing the struggles from Ontario families each and every day.

It didn't end there. Thanks to Dalton McGuinty, Ontario families are faced with increased taxes through the tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes, just to name a few. Last week, the McGuinty Liberals voted down a motion calling on the Premier to reject a tax increase. You know why? Because they're keeping their options open. Then, on Wednesday, the finance minister tabled this motion that we're debating now and said that a McGuinty government will not raise or lower taxes. Is anybody else getting the feeling of *déjà vu*?

The people in the province of Ontario could hear from the McGuinty Liberals a thousand times—you know that "1,000 pardons"? A thousand times they could repeat the pledge that they will not raise their taxes. A thousand times they could print this ridiculous motion—they'll send it out in the mail, trust me. They'll use your tax dollars and send it out in the mail, just as they waste millions of dollars of advertising telling people that they're getting 10% off their hydro bills, like the people haven't figured that out. It's on their hydro bill; it says 10%. But they still advertise it 20 times a week. I hear it in my riding.

You're paying for it. The people are paying for it, because they are so afraid of the revolt that is coming in this province, because people are sick and tired of having Dalton McGuinty say one thing and do something else. There is not a person, when I talk to people in my riding, when I talk to people around the province—and those folks on the other side are hearing the same thing. They are hearing the same thing. But they won't stand up to their own cabinet, to their own government, because they're afraid.

Now, some of them are bailing. Some of them are saying, "That's enough. We're getting out of here." But for the rest of them, they're just doing as they're told, just like the fellow from Ottawa-Orléans sitting in the back there, doing what he's told—except that part about children. He came up with that on his own, him and Margaret Best.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you please refer to the name of the riding? Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The Minister of Health Promotion.

Out there in Ontario, there is nobody—nobody—who believes that this government will not raise taxes if they're elected. They're hardwired to do so; it's in their DNA. He repeatedly said that he wouldn't raise taxes; he

did exactly that. How is he going to pay for his \$17-billion deficit? He's going to raise your taxes, because he certainly has no ability to manage spending. His recent agreement with OPSEU, where they even had a secret deal in place that they went to court to defend, they went to court to keep secret, and when the terms of that deal were reached, we find out that after the election, after Dalton McGuinty gets his mandate again—if the people fall for it, but I don't think they will—then there's another 1% increase in that contract, not negotiated in good faith but behind closed doors, handed out behind closed doors on the backs of seniors and those children that Mr. McNeely likes to talk about, the backs of those children in struggling Ottawa-Orléans—

1940

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Riding, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —the member for Ottawa-Orléans—the backs of those children in struggling families that he pretends to care so much about. But he'll foist tax increases on each and every one of them in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

He blabs on about coal. Where was Dalton McGuinty with his promise to close the coal plants by 2007? Where was Phil McNeely then? Where was the member then? Why wasn't he standing up in protest to protect children? Because his words are hollow. Where was he standing up to protect children and say, "Close them down"? He never said a word, because he only does what he's told to do. He sits in the backbench, and he'll sit there until he is old and grey. He is old and grey.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I'd ask the member to withdraw that last comment. Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**Interjection:** This is getting a little personal here.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I'll tell you, if they want to open up that door, I'll walk through it.

There's not a single person in the province who believes that when this election is over and if Dalton McGuinty is re-elected—that 10% rebate on hydro? It's gone. It's gone, just like when he promised to keep the rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour after he got elected, and then he changed it. This 10% rebate will be gone just as quickly. As soon as he gets his mandate, he is going to be making sure that he gets every possible nickel out of the pockets of Ontario families, every possible nickel out of struggling seniors in this province. He wants it now, but he's backing off because there's an election on the horizon.

What these members should be doing is, they should actually go out to the ridings. They should go out to the ridings and actually talk to the real people, not just get their speaking notes from the corner office on the second floor. They should talk to the real people. Sit down and talk to some families; go to the coffee shops. Stop doing the drive-through so you can avoid the real people. Go into the coffee shop, sit down and ask them, "How are you doing?" Ask them how their family is doing, how they're getting by in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Ask



them if they think they're better off, like you want to say—"Ninety three percent of the people are better off" or "All these jobs are back." Talk to the real people in the coffee shops. Talk to some people in the forestry business who are struggling to keep their companies going in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario because of hydro rates, because of overregulation, because of gas prices.

Oh, here's another one. Last week, the Minister of Finance starts talking about—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Research and Innovation.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He starts talking about how the HST has actually meant that gas prices are lower. Where else but Dalton McGuinty's Ontario could an increase be a reduction? Where else but here could an increase be a reduction?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member may continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's beyond the pale. How ludicrous is that, insinuating that an increase is a reduction? When they're talking about gas prices—and I'm not one of these guys who jumps on the Dan McTeague bandwagon and says that government can regulate gas prices. I'm not saying that. But I do know this: Whatever that pump says out there tonight, it is 8% more than it would have been if Dalton McGuinty didn't impose the HST on it.

They can talk about the federal government all they want, but the federal government didn't tell them to impose it on hydro, on home heating for those children—those children, Phil, who are freezing—HST on home heating, for gasoline, hydro bills—8% more because of the decisions of this government.

The federal government never told them they had to apply that tax on all of those essentials. That was the choice of this government, because they wanted the revenue to pay for their hokey schemes here in the province of Ontario, to pay for some of those ridiculous energy experiments—Samsung, a \$7-billion deal; FIT programs, up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour for power. They don't make sense. Tim Hudak will stop that. We'll have a free, open bidding process for renewables in the province that will work. They'll bring renewables to the grid in Ontario, but they'll be at prices that Ontario can live with.

Madam Speaker, I would like to amend this motion. I would like to propose an amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member will read the amendment.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I move that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "strong" in the first paragraph; deleting the second paragraph; substituting the word "it" for "and" at the beginning of the third paragraph; and deleting the words after "HST rate" in the last paragraph.

I thereby move that amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

Mr. Yakabuski has moved an amendment to the government motion—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order, so you can hear the amendment—that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "strong" in the first paragraph; deleting the second paragraph; substituting the word "it" for "and" at the beginning of the third paragraph; and deleting the words after "HST rate" in the last paragraph.

Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I think now we are debating the amendment, are we not? I want to thank the mover of the amendment, because when I looked at this motion I couldn't believe that a government would waste an entire night in this Legislature stating something that they believe is obvious and the rest of us know cannot have even a kernel of truth within it. This is a government that continues to talk about its failures as if they were some kind of an accomplishment. They continue to talk about an HST as if it's a good thing and the people out there in Ontario like it. They continue to talk about the \$4.8 billion in tax relief for business when they're running a \$17-billion or \$18-billion deficit and the social programs are in decline and the schools don't have enough money. I don't know why we're standing here tonight and why this government is so proud of the non-accomplishment that they want to debate it over and over and over again. I would have thought this government would have been much happier to run away and hide what they're doing, rather than to try to shout it from the rooftops so that everybody knows again.

Anyway, I'm thankful to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I'm happy that he has deleted a whole bunch of this so that we can talk about, I guess, a little bit less. But here it is. This is a government that wants to maintain the harmonized sales tax at the current rate, and talks about that as if it's something great. This is the government that chose exactly how to deal with the harmonized sales tax. We have a government in BC, in British Columbia, that is equally detested at this time, also a Liberal government, for bringing in this same tax. But that government decided how they were going to deal with it, and they weren't going to put the sales tax on gasoline or home heating fuel or hydro. They weren't going to do it because that government, as backward as they are, knew that the people would rebel over all of that. That government, as backward as it is and as unpopular as it is, knew that they ought not to do that. But here in Ontario, we decided to do a whole bunch of things a whole lot different. I don't understand it.

If the Minister of Health Promotion was here, I would ask her why she continued to take the tax off food that is really bad for you. All this fattening fast food—they took the tax off it. That doesn't make any sense to me if you're talking about health promotion, but that was the priority of this government.

1950

I look at this motion that they have, and they're talking about creating 293,000 new jobs. I have to laugh.



They lost some 300,000 jobs. Some of those jobs came back. Almost all of the jobs that came back had nothing, absolutely nothing to do with this government, nothing at all. I don't blame them for the loss of the—I'm not saying the 300,000 job loss was the fault of the government, because there were a lot of factors at play. The government was part of the problem, but world situations were certainly part of the problem; the banks and the greed and Wall Street were part of the problem. But don't sit here and say in your motion that you have created 293,000 jobs, because that is just so much blarney. It's not true at all.

The jobs have been created because the world situation is changing. The economies in some places are improving a little. Things are happening. You happen to be caught up in a little bit of a wave. But it's not your policies that are doing this, it's a whole bunch of other things that are playing together in a broad economic platform.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you, Michael. Thank you for that.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, it's true. It's true.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Put it on the record. Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's true: You did not create these jobs. It's absolutely true. There are lots of things at play here. But when this government tries to brag about what they're doing, they're bragging about something they had nothing to do with at all, and that's the reality.

So let's take a little look here. Let's take a look, a little bit, at this stuff. Ontario remains 16,000 jobs below where we were three years ago. Some 16,000 people in this province don't have a job who had one three years ago. Now, you can say, "You know, we did some wonderful things"—I can hear the Liberals now—"we've done wonderful things because most of the people got a job back." But you know, there are a lot more people who didn't, and if you look at the neighbouring province of Manitoba, which was and probably still is a bit more of a have-not province than we are, Manitoba has increased their jobs since the height three years ago. They have increased it by 15,000 jobs. That's a little province with a small population. It has done remarkable work that this government is totally—was and is—incapable of doing.

You ask yourself, how can a little tiny place like Manitoba get 15,000 more jobs and we lose 16,000? Look in the mirror, folks; look in the mirror. What did they do that we didn't do? What is their hydro rate? A whole lot better than ours. What is their fiscal policy? A whole lot better than ours. How do they give out money for job creation? A whole lot better than this government does, and they have some success. And you wonder why people are angry out there.

I read a little story today. I had to laugh. It was in the Ottawa paper, and it talked about the Premier going door to door with his brother in the federal campaign. I don't know how many of you saw this little story. It was rather remarkable. A gentleman came to the door, a Grit sup-

porter, a Liberal through and through, and he looked at David McGuinty and he said, "You know, I'm going to vote for you. I'm going to vote for you." And so David got a big smile. And then he told the Premier, "Get off my porch." And this is a Liberal supporter. This is a Liberal supporter in Ottawa South.

This is the story out there, folks over there. This government is not doing what people want them to do, and this government is making an awful lot of enemies out there. Part of that is because people are unemployed. People are getting crummy jobs. People are having to work in places at minimum wage or part-time. People are suffering. At the same time, this is a government that wants to give away desperately all the money you can possibly find to their corporate buddies. Every single penny you can possibly find is being shovelled out the door. You've got \$17 billion or \$18 billion in deficit, but you've still got time to hand out another \$4 billion to people you think are going to help you.

The Ontario government says that the corporate income tax cut will hand \$535 million to banks and \$135 million to insurance companies. That's what you say. That's what you say with pride. There's the Minister of Revenue holding up her little book with pride in what she's doing. She's absolutely thinking that this is the most wonderful thing, to give away two thirds or three quarters of a billion dollars of corporate income tax to banks and insurance companies. That is on top of the \$520 million provided to banks through the elimination of the capital tax. In total, of the \$4 billion in corporate and capital tax cuts the government has announced, \$1.2 billion will be pocketed by the banks and the insurance companies.

My friend from Nickel Belt had an opportunity to talk about what they're doing with some of this money. I just want to repeat those figures, because remember, all the time that they are making so much more money and all the time that their CEOs are growing portly—let me put that word, portly—with all of the increases they're getting in their salary, banks and insurance companies under the Liberal government watch have shed 25,000 jobs. You are paying them to shed 25,000 jobs. Just for the record again: Scotiabank, quarterly profit \$1.2 billion; Royal Bank, profit of \$1.8 billion in the last quarter; TD Bank, \$1.5 billion in the last quarter; Bank of Montreal, a paltry \$776 million in the last quarter; CIBC, \$799 million in the last quarter; Sun Life Financial, \$508 million in three months; Manulife Financial, \$1.79 billion in the last three months; and Great-West Life, \$508 million in just a quarter.

At the same time, you heard their CEOs' salaries. This government is paying for all of that. You're paying for all that while you're running a \$17-billion deficit. You're paying for all of that when you're saying that you don't have the money for schools, you don't have the money for the hospitals, you don't have the money for all of the social infrastructure that once made this province great. You don't have it, but you have it for them. I don't know why you have it for them and for nobody else. I'm hoping some Liberal will answer it.



Why did they deserve this money when the poor don't deserve it? Why do they deserve the money when the kids can't get it for decent educations, or when kids in university have the highest debt load of any place in the country, as the Minister of Revenue gets the high-five from the Attorney General for that? I don't know. They're pretty happy with it. But this is what it's all about.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Do we have to listen to this all night?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes, you do. Eight minutes and 18 seconds; you're going to listen to exactly what I think.

Since 2000, the combined federal Ontario corporate tax rate will have been reduced from 44% to 25%, yet business investment has deteriorated since then. In fact, rather than investing in productivity, machinery and equipment and creating jobs, corporations have been accumulating cash and similar liquid assets at an increasing rate. If you want to know what's happening, they're all getting bloody rich. That's what they're doing. They're not hiring anybody; they're just getting rich. They're paying themselves bigger and bigger salaries, and you're letting them do it with taxpayers' money.

Business has added some \$83 billion to its cash holdings, and that's what this government is proud of. That's what they're asking us to vote on tonight: "Vote for us. Vote for what we're doing." New Democrats aren't going to vote for that. We're not buying a pig in a poke. We're not doing any of this stuff, because this government is absolutely wrong in its fiscal and corporate policy.

**2000**

I want to talk a little bit about this government, what it's doing in terms of the TMX. I have to at the same time remind my honourable friends immediately to my right here in the official opposition that they're pretty much in agreement around all of this. It was only the New Democrats, in the hearings for the TMX, who stood alone. It was only the New Democrats who said, "We think this is a bad deal for Ontario, a bad deal for Toronto and a bad deal for Canada." We stood there and we continued to say that this was not a good deal. But you know, all the Liberal members and all the Conservative members of the committee that studied this came to the same conclusion: They wanted it to go ahead with a few certain small little safeguards.

In terms of whether this is a merger or a takeover, I think it's pretty clear this is a takeover. It's a takeover by the LSE, the London Stock Exchange. We do not see any clear benefits accruing to the people of this province, and we see a government, along with the official opposition, that is headed down the totally wrong path. We want to say for the record that we welcome any group, including those same bloated banks, coming to the rescue of Canada and coming to the rescue of the companies that trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange. We think that we should be proud, in this country, of our businesses; we should be proud, in this country, of how we manage our own financial affairs, and we don't need those financial affairs to be managed in Rome or in London or any other

place. We are self-sufficient on our own, and as Canadians we should be proud of ourselves.

Opposition to the HST—I've got to talk about this for a few minutes, because this is a biggie. This government says that the hated HST improves productivity and creates jobs. If this isn't laughable, I don't know what is. You know, they trot out a tired economist who said it was going to create 600,000 jobs, and yet can't prove that it's created a single one. They talk about Jack Mintz all the way from Alberta as the guru on this, but it hasn't created any jobs here and it hasn't created any jobs in British Columbia, either. This is not a tax policy that will create jobs. In fact, it's going to cost jobs, and if you bother to go out to small business people around this province, they will tell you that it is hurting them, hurting their business and hurting their ability to hire additional staff, that this is a killer, because ordinary people who have to pay the tax are less and less likely to buy the daily necessities that they bought in the past.

The release data from Statistics Canada, along with a number of other reports, suggests that there is little connection between lower corporate taxes and new job-creating investments. In fact, since 1999, Ontario has provided more than \$20 billion in corporate tax cuts without any appreciable job growth that goes with it—\$20 billion, and hardly a job to show for it. That's what this government is asking us to vote for and to support. We're not likely to do it. Most economists today are looking at this failed experiment that you continue to trumpet every chance you get, and saying that they prefer highly targeted employer incentives that encourage direct investment in new plant and machinery, expanded skills training and new hires. That's precisely what they do in Manitoba, to much better effect.

This is a bad tax. In our view, it penalizes low- and modest-income folks for simply paying for the basic necessities of life: things like home heating, because they have to keep themselves warm in winter; things like hydro, because they have to have the lights go on and they have to do their cooking and their laundry and I guess occasionally, if they're not too tired, watch a little television; and for the gasoline at the pumps, so that they can get to work in the first place. They simply cannot afford to pay the 8% that you targeted them with. They simply cannot afford it, and at least the government in British Columbia, for all its misgivings and wrongdoings, had the good sense not to tax that.

I want to just in the last couple of minutes talk about the energy policy of this government, which is a disaster. Every single day, I listen in this House as the numbers are trotted out as if something's actually happening. You know, a job here, a job there, jobs foreseeable in the future, in 2015, that may be created. The minister, day in and day out, stands up there and talks of things that will likely never happen. In April 1998 this all started when Ontario passed the Energy Competition Act. That was the previous government; that was the Conservatives. Ontario Hydro would continue to supply electricity to certain industrial customers at a cheaper rate, and ordinary consumers would pay for the discount.



Then they restarted Pickering A, and that was a boondoggle if ever there was—billions of dollars over budget that we're paying for, that everyone in their energy bill every month is forced to pay for, with HST added, I might add. And then the government back then set a deregulation until May 2002. I was here in the House. I remember that. It was challenged by two unions and the court and it was thrown out for being illegal, because they hadn't followed any policies in their zeal to privatize and deregulate. It was thrown out.

They had to abandon, but this government here hasn't abandoned. This government has allowed the continuation of those failed Conservative policies, electricity prices have gone through the roof, and terrible market design—the whole thing. I have to say that—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** It's a quarter after eight. Let's go home.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, it's almost finished. I have to say that what was begun then should have been corrected by this government, but it has not been corrected. There is a whole lot wrong with the economic and fiscal policy of this government. They seem absolutely unaware or unable to correct themselves in this late stream going down the road.

I want to say that I appreciate the amendment that has been brought forward. The amendment makes far more sense, but I know that, given the majority this government opposite has, they only want to laud themselves, even when there is nothing to laud at all. This is a shame, that we're spending all night on such a motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Maybe I could just start off with the member for Beaches—East York. It's amazing that people can compare apples and oranges. I would expect that even though my friend is also from Toronto, he'd know a little bit more about the geography and the economy of our country. The GTA alone, every six years, absorbs an immigrant population equivalent to the entire population of the city of Winnipeg, with which I am somewhat familiar, having been its mayor. The five major employers in Manitoba—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The government.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, it's not the government. Let me explain. New Flyer Industries, the largest bus manufacturer, has benefited through the recession through the buy-American policy, which has been the biggest subsidy of exports. The second-largest employer in the private sector there, in manufacturing—they're about 11%, as is Ontario—is StandardAero, which does recovery and repair of aircraft, and which has also benefited by some of the largest subsidies, period. Our two equivalents would be, what, Chrysler and Ford, which crashed and burned and are in major debt to governments and were the first two casualties.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Would the member of the fourth party have a little humility just for once?

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** Talk to the Chair. Isn't that what you're supposed to be doing?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The thing that's also really entertaining is that here is a province that is a net exporter of people, has a declining population—and it's quite interesting, because I always love listening to fiscal arguments. When I was mayor in Winnipeg we cut taxes every year—we cut them by 8.4% over my two terms—and cut the debt in half, and the credit rating in my city went from A- to AA+. In the eight years I've been gone, there hasn't been a single property tax increase, while these guys who were in power here were leaving a \$5.6-billion deficit and seeing a net decline in their credit rating during the same period of time. They led the largest, most prosperous province. They couldn't manage the economy in good times. The party opposite couldn't even organize a two-car funeral.

I find it very entertaining; the member from Beaches—East York said something that I think is almost hysterically funny. It should be on Saturday Night Live. He said that the reason the recovery has happened in Ontario is because the rest of the world is recovering and pulling us along.

Well, what are our three major trading partners? That would be, oh, the United States: 14% job recovery, a GDP growth half of what Ontario's is. Number two? That would be Japan. That would be, what, 38% job recovery and a GDP that was in the tank pre-tsunami? And number three would be the United Kingdom, which has the worst job recovery in western Europe, less than a third of ours, and a GDP that's in the tank. So if these major trading partners are pulling us out, they should be dragging us into the ditch.

2010

You know what's really interesting? We have two economically incompetent parties opposite. They just don't understand the economy.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Once again—we've seen this time and time again from members opposite, who are just completely dismissive and denigrating of members of this—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Lanark will know that's not a point of order.

The Minister of Research and Innovation.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Madam Speaker, I would just ask that if the leader of the emerging fourth party is going to interrupt, will you at least stop my clock?

So, yes, we are investing more. We are investing \$12 billion a year in roads, infrastructure, transit and hydro when the party opposite spent only \$3 billion on infrastructure in Ontario, leaving us a \$9-billion-a-year deferred maintenance bill for our children. This is the biggest infrastructure deficit in North America. You were spending \$1 on maintenance for every \$4 bill. It's like someone who has a \$30,000 outstanding credit card bill and is making, like, \$20 payments every month. This is your idea of economic competence.

My favourite, my very favourite, is the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook. The bubble that the Leader of



the Opposition lives in is kind of extraordinary. This is The Building of Niagara's Green Economy. I don't think anyone opposite has read this. You know, I found it very entertaining. I was down there meeting with the chambers of commerce across the Niagara region, and I asked them how they felt about things like the HST. I asked them how they felt about our green energy policies. I asked them about all of these kinds of things.

So what was the consensus? Let me share: With the government's new legislation, "the confluence of demand and capacity will likely never get better. Estimates of the scope of climate-friendly opportunities range from US \$600 billion to US \$1 trillion" for Ontario companies.

Then I asked them, "So, how's it going there? What's happening?" Do you know that 80% of renewable energy in Ontario is in the Niagara region? Isn't that extraordinary? The Niagara region is the largest beneficiary. So what's happening there? "Niagara has a unique advantage on the ramp up."

Here are some of the companies that have benefited from the Green Energy Act and my ministry's clean tech: Wainfleet wind power. Walker Environmental Group: they are capturing gas from waste and turning it into power. PlanET Biogas, a Niagara-based company, is producing energy through anaerobic digestion. Nalco Mobotec, an international firm in Niagara, is developing new pellet-made biosolids and has the potential to mitigate the impact of coal burning. We know that would disappoint the folks opposite if we were mitigating coal burning, but there are actually private sector companies making money on it.

Elementa from St. Catharines are leaders in a process that converts carbon-based matter into a synthetic gas that can be used to generate energy. Fort Erie's DMI Industries is a global company in the field of wind power manufacturing. Welland's CRS Electronics specializes in the development of new energy LED lighting. COU Solar/Oneworld has just expanded into Welland to build solar energy components as part of the Samsung expansion.

I will go on; there are 17 more companies. The largest clean-tech cluster in North America, the third-largest in the world, did not exist. The vast majority of jobs is increasingly created in the Niagara region, and what does the party opposite want to do?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Shut it down.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Rip up the feed-in tariff program and shut down the Samsung energy deal, where we're buying \$7 billion.

Do you know that there would be no region that would lose more jobs more quickly than the Niagara region? These are 17 companies, all of whom I've met with, all of whom the opposition members, including the member of the fourth party, have talked through and haven't listened. I'm sure if I sent them a test, they couldn't name three of the companies.

These are thousands of jobs. These are people who are struggling and coming out with new, clean technologies. General Motors in St. Catharines invested \$245 million

in electric transmissions, bringing 8,000 jobs back into the Ontario economy, and Chrysler and General Motors paid their loans back five years ahead. St. Catharines restored its auto sector.

What would they do? The leader, the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook says, "I wouldn't subsidize the auto companies. Not me." Go tell the autoworkers that in Niagara. I cannot wait to run against you guys in the next election. I will spend half my time in Niagara region knocking on doors. You guys are comical. Destroy the feed-in tariff program.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order. Stop the clock for a minute, please.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Oh, come on, Speaker. Throw someone out for fun.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Don't tempt me, member from Willowdale. The member from Renfrew is not in his seat. Could he please take his seat? Or the member from Bruce-Grey.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I am in my seat.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I can stand here all night. It's quieter that way.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Don't be difficult.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The government House leader isn't helping.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** If I keep talking, do you promise he won't get up?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I'm going to name the member from Bruce-Grey in a moment.

Minister of Research and Innovation.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Part of the perspective you get on this side of the House—my father very proudly owned a dairy farm in Alexandria, and I spent a lot of my childhood working on a dairy farm in small-town Ontario.

Je suis né à Montréal. J'ai passé ma jeunesse à Montréal. J'ai lutté contre les indépendantistes. Je suis fier d'être Canadien.

I lived one third of my life in—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Lanark.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Madam Speaker, thank you. We don't want to miss any of these pearls of wisdom coming from the opposition.

I was mayor of prairie city and I've lived one third of my life in Ontario, and in Toronto for a good chunk that. I'm very proud that my uncles and aunts worked in the mines in Sudbury, at times when it was very hard. Both my uncles died in their 50s. The reason we were involved in a dairy farm in eastern Ontario was because it was my father's friend's, who could barely make it.

I'm very proud, when we talk about jobs, that I, as the member for Toronto Centre, and very proudly an Ontarian and very proudly a Canadian—and I don't agree with my friend from Bruce-Grey, who thinks that we

have a Toronto mentality, or that my part of the province is lesser than his or shouldn't be part of this province. I believe that whether you live in Owen Sound or Toronto, you are no less an Ontarian. If you've lived in three parts of this country and you come from the kind of stock and the kinds of difficulties that my mother and my grandmother came from—

*Interjections.*

2020

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** —which is not deserving of interruption from the folks opposite. My grandmother came here with almost nothing, arrived in Hamilton, could not speak French or English, and it was because—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Do you want to just keep going, Bill? Do you want to keep winding your clock all night, or what?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Speak through the Chair, and refer to ridings. Thank you.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'm sorry, Madam Speaker.

We understand the interdependence of that, and why it's so important to me that we have a microFIT program that has solar power on 10,000 farms, that we have a risk management program for farmers. I'm probably one of the few members from Toronto who has actually milked a cow for a living in my life. We on this side of the House have a large view, a big-tent view of Ontario. We don't have to play the cynical divide-and-conquer politics.

But since you raised energy, this is what I find. It's disingenuous, I think, to say, "We sort of understand time-of-use, because, you know, as Conservatives, we don't want to have to build a whole lot more additional nuclear power and we don't want to have to do a whole lot more generation. If we could just get people to flatten out their use." I actually read your energy policy, and that part of it made sense. But what you're not telling people is that if we don't have time-of-use, then we have to build energy to peak capacity.

What you're not telling us—I think Ontarians are pretty smart—is that you have to build a heck of a lot more nuclear. As a matter of fact—I was chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy—you would have to increase nuclear capacity by 50% in Ontario if we can't flatten use. Now, you want to see energy bills skyrocket? All you have to do is maintain peak use at twice what baseload is, which is what you're proposing, and then you're really going to see skyrocketing prices. But you don't want to tell Ontarians that, because then they wouldn't vote for you.

So you'd have to increase nuclear generation in Ontario by about 50% over the next 25 years if you don't flatten use. If we keep having peak that's running twice as hard as—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** So here we are. Madam Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's kind of extraordinary: If you go around the world right now to any like economy, certainly anybody who has had the kinds of challenges we've had with the auto sector, you won't find a place that's had a 114% recovery in jobs. In the United States, in any like economy, you're looking at 14%, 17%. If we did what they said—destroy the green FIT program, cancel the Samsung deal, tear up the agreement with the auto companies—we would be in the same situation the US is in, with 14% job recovery.

The other thing that I find so strange and odd, that demonstrates the lack of economic confidence, is to refer to the Samsung deal as a sweetheart deal, because all you have to do is compare it to the job that was done with Toyota in Alliston, or compare it to the auto pact. It is a very modest deal. By the standards of any foreign direct investment, it is a modest deal which deals with the purchase of green energy. There are very few places that do that. What has it created?

I'm just wondering if I could get some water from somebody, Madam Speaker.

So here is a deal that relatively, as a percentage of contribution—and what also amazes me is the complete attack on foreign direct investment. You, right now, have global pools of capital in the world that are sourced by and competed for by regions. What the party opposite would do in power would be to drive foreign direct investment outside of our borders. The agreements that we have that they want to cancel—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Bruce-Grey.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Well, let me address the member who never gets a question from his leader. I feel sorry for him; someone has to answer his question. Clearly his leader won't let him ask one. I think we're going to discover why.

All you have to do is turn to the letters to the editor page of the Globe and Mail, and you'll see a letter from Samsung, and all you have to do is look at the report that came out today from the Metcalf Foundation—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock, please. Some warning for the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** All you have to do is read the editorial page and you can see statements by the representative's corporation of the chill that has gone through the investment community since they talked about tearing up an agreement.

Where I was raised, when you make an agreement, you honour an agreement. Why would you not tear up agreements with the auto sector, which are much more generous? Why would you not tear up the agreements with Toyota, which are much more generous? Do you know how many thousands of jobs and how many small companies would collapse if the Samsung deal doesn't go forward? And to say that it's somehow contrary to the interests of Ontario companies is like saying that Ford,



General Motors and Chrysler are bad for Linamar and Magna. A supply chain like that creates a demand and a supply of goods and services critical to emerging Ontario companies.

There's a letter that was done by the Economic Club of Canada, signed by Canada's 32 leading economists, endorsing the HST, endorsing the green FIT program and saying that these are vital measures in the global economy.

These folks opposite think we still live with a production economy. They don't realize that 80% of the jobs being created in Ontario right now are innovation-based jobs. They're jobs where people think, imagine, design, discovery, engineer and finance; that's the new economy. As a matter of fact, 5% of our companies are generating 50% of our jobs. Those jobs all involve university and college education. We've added 200,000 places to our colleges and universities. When the party opposite was in power, they raised tuition 67% and they cut half a billion dollars from our post-secondary education system.

Knowledge; tax reform. I'm amazed that you can be against the HST—again, somewhat disingenuous. It seems to me that you should go and talk to the federal finance minister, the federal minister of economic development and trade. We actually have an export-based economy, and what's amazing is, this is the first time in Ontario history that Ontario has fully recovered 114% of the jobs, 3.4% GDP, without recovery in the US. It's the first time in Ontario history that we have had a full employment recovery and GDP over 3% without a recover in the US. That would not have happened if you were in power. The simple announcements last week by the leader of the party opposite would have put that in the tank and ended thousands of jobs and destroyed the recovery.

If you decided to do what you'd probably do, which is cancel the HST, you would add \$8.5 billion to the cost of doing business and erode the capacity of small businesses to compete. That's your economic policy.

You know, you had it easy when you were in power. You had one of the greatest periods of economic growth in the history of the world. We've been in power in one of the biggest global meltdowns out of the United States. You couldn't manage an improvement in productivity. You had a 65-cent dollar. You had a 45% subsidy of Ontario exports. You couldn't manage significant growth. You couldn't keep up with growth in the 1970s. We are now producing GDP growth and job creation at a rate better than what you could produce in good times. We have a deficit that is no more serious than the federal government's deficit, and we're the only ones managing it on a realistic basis, and we aren't having to change our debt retirement schedule, like the federal government, like the Alberta government, like the Manitoba government, like the Quebec government. We're the—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

2030

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's kind of easy to tell that we've only got seven days left in this House before we go to the hustings. And I've got bad news for you, Madam Speaker: I think in the next seven days, things might get worse. But then you don't have to spend all that time in that chair, and it'll be okay. You'll get through it. We all get through it. They make up their numbers and their stories, and the opposition just simply sits here and tells the truth. We'll see what happens on October 6 as Ontarians cast their votes and decide as to whether or not that story is going to rule the day or that truth will overcome.

I think we've been debating this motion for a bit of time, and perhaps we should just revisit the motion. Government motion number 74, Mr. Duncan: "that the Legislative Assembly recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario families..."—I suppose that's a recognition that life is not easy for Ontario families right now. It's a recognition that Ontario families are indeed suffering.

But it goes on to say, "that to make life easier for Ontario families and help our economy remain strong, Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, as reaffirmed in the 2011 budget, removes 90,000 Ontarians from the income tax rolls"—that doesn't mention the 182,000 income taxpayers that they put on the rolls in their first budget, back in 2003—"provides 93% of Ontarians with a permanent personal income tax cut..." Again, that doesn't mention the fact that the income taxes of this province have increased, one way or another, by 73% over their term of government, while the economy has only expanded 10%.

It goes on to say, "maintains the harmonized sales tax at the current rate." Now, that's an important statement in this budget, in this motion. It "maintains the harmonized sales tax at the current rate and provides \$12 billion in tax relief for families and \$4.8 billion in tax relief for businesses." It doesn't talk about the millions and billions of dollars that they have increased those taxes by.

It "recognizes that with Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth, the economy is turning the corner by creating more than 293,000 new jobs since the global recession"—and, of course, it doesn't mention the fact that the vast majority of those jobs are public sector jobs and the jobs that were lost during the recession were manufacturing jobs, good-paying manufacturing jobs that paid taxes and allowed people who had those jobs to buy homes, raise families and pay their bills.

It also goes on to say, "rejects the introduction of a carbon tax." Now, of course, that's a very important one, because the only people who are talking about a carbon tax in this place are the government people, who are musing with a carbon tax. But here they say they reject the introduction of a carbon tax, just like in 2003, when the Premier said, "I won't raise your taxes." So the introduction of a carbon tax is almost a *fait accompli*, and it's a measure that would hurt Ontario's economic growth. Of course, that has not stopped the government in the past.



It “rejects an increase to the HST rate.” Again, I remind you: The Premier has said, prior to the elections in 2003 and 2007, that he wouldn’t increase our taxes, and then he, of course, turned around and increased them by whopping rates, and I’ll speak to that a little more as we get into it. The fact that he rejects an increase to the HST, again, almost makes it a *fait accompli*, because past performance is the best judge of future performance.

“Or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians the most, take \$3 billion out of health care and education funding and harm Ontario’s economic recovery.”

I think that’s an interesting motion that the government introduced. For the life of me, I don’t know why they would introduce that motion because, as the Premier has talked about—he mentioned it on April 4, 2011, sitting right over there, and it’s quoted in Hansard. He said, “[A] very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past.”

He talked about not raising taxes in 2003. He talked about not raising taxes in 2007. Now he’s talking about not increasing the HST and not introducing a carbon tax. Do you see a theme here? I notice a definite theme. He denied it in 2003 and did it. He denied it in 2007 and did it. Now he’s denying it in 2011. Hello?

You know, it’s disappointing that I’m speaking here at 25 minutes to 9. It’s right in the middle of *Dancing With the Stars*, and our television audience, I’m sure, has waned from one of the most popular shows on TV. Only the most dedicated people would be watching, and, of course, that would be my wife, Sandy. She would be watching at home, I’m sure, perhaps sitting in my chair, because she likes to sit in my chair when I’m not there, but that’s all right. I know she’s very dedicated to watching the debate and how it unfolds. I know the people of Ontario will get that message: that what has been a very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past, and what has happened in the past is exactly what is happening here, tonight, in this motion.

The Premier is denying that he’s going to raise taxes, and that is a sure thing: He is going to increase taxes in those two areas that he’s denied. He’s going to increase the HST and he’s going to introduce a carbon tax. Those two things you can take to the bank because he has said that he will not do them, the same way he said that he would not do those other tax increases before.

Let’s talk about Premier McGuinty’s record, because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds for Ontario, if he is re-elected in October. Before the 2003 election, again I say, he promised that he would not lower taxes, but he would not raise them either. On September 11, 2003, prior to that year’s election, Premier McGuinty signed a pledge—he actually signed his name to a card—and it was called the taxpayers’ protection promise. Let me read that pledge, just so that everybody understands exactly what the Premier signed up for on September 11, 2003. It says, “I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: not raise taxes

or implement any new taxes without the ... consent of Ontario voters.” We all remember the commercials that ran in 2003—at least those of us in politics certainly do. They ran over 200 times during the election campaign. We all know that signing that pledge helped get the Premier elected. He was elected by breaking his word.

We all know what happened next. As soon as he had the keys to the Premier’s office, he treated his words as if he had never said them. He brought in a health tax, and that health tax was the largest tax increase in Ontario’s history—about \$4 billion, all told. That’s what he brought in after he said that he would not raise taxes and he actually signed a pledge saying that he would not raise taxes. Yet then he brought in the largest tax increase in Ontario’s history.

The second-largest tax increase in Ontario history was brought in by Bob Rae in the budget of 1992, and that represented about a \$2.5-billion tax increase. The second-largest is \$2.5 billion; Premier McGuinty brought in a tax increase of \$4 billion. So it wasn’t just a little increase over the second-largest tax increase; it was a whopping increase over the second-largest increase, from \$2.5 billion all the way to \$4 billion.

It’s interesting: The third-largest tax increase in Ontario’s history was brought in by Bob Nixon in 1989, also a health tax. Liberals apparently like to tax health, because Bob Nixon brought in a tax increase of about \$2.1 billion in 1989. That was Ontario’s third-largest tax increase, brought in by a former Liberal government—a former Liberal government that also doubled the debt and doubled the budget of this province during their short six years in power, from 1985 to 1990.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** Five.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** No, it’s six years if you count them all. The zero counts as a year, there. He’s trying to mess my mathematics up.

It’s the largest single tax grab in the history of Ontario, taking \$4 billion a year out of Ontario families.

In 2007, of course, he did it again. Before the 2007 election, Premier McGuinty emphatically denied that he would raise taxes. When told that his critics wouldn’t believe him, he said, “They’re wrong, they’re wrong, they’re wrong.” That’s a direct quote. Three times: “They’re wrong, they’re wrong, they’re wrong.” I’m sure the Premier actually believed it when he said it. I don’t believe that he’s a dishonest man; I think Premier McGuinty, Premier Dad, is a nice guy. When he said this, “They’re wrong, they’re wrong, they’re wrong,” I think he believed it, but he couldn’t help himself because he’s hard-wired. He’s hard-wired to raise taxes and spend money. He has never met a program that he hasn’t wanted to finance. But after the vote in October 2007 and with no warning, he broke his promise again and brought in the \$3-billion HST tax grab.

**2040**

This was immediately after a 30-day campaign period in which the harmonization of the PST and the GST was never mentioned once in the election campaign. Now, he had to be thinking about it at that time. He had to be



aware that this was on the table. Yet he didn't mention it during the campaign. I was very disappointed that a politician in Ontario would take that kind of action, because that kind of action casts a pall on all politicians. I was extremely disappointed that the Premier would take that action.

I would remind the people of Ontario and the people in this House that the Premier said on September 11 that a very good predictor of future behaviour is what has happened in the past. In the two elections that the Premier has run in, he has promised not to raise taxes. "They're wrong, they're wrong, they're wrong. I'll never raise your taxes." Twice he has done it, and here tonight his government is saying, "We will not increase the HST and we will not bring in a carbon tax." Yet a very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past.

Folks, we've got an increase in the HST; the only debate is whether it's going to be two or five points. And we're going to have a carbon tax if we re-elect this government. That's a fait accompli—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** And, yes, the government is upset about that, but it's absolute truth, because we all know that a very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past. It must be true, because the Premier said it.

The HST on hydro bills is one of the reasons hydro bills are skyrocketing. Gasoline is at record-high prices; it was at \$1.41, which I think was an Ontario record, not long ago, a week ago. It's now at \$1.32 or so around Toronto. About 12 cents of every one of these litres is thanks to the HST. The HST didn't apply to gasoline before it was introduced on July 1 of last year, and yet it does now, and that represents about 12 cents of that. Instead of being \$1.32 a litre, without the HST it would be about \$1.20. Thank you, Premier McGuinty, for sticking us with that extra 12 cents on every litre of gasoline that we buy.

On the very same day of July 1, 2010, when the HST was introduced, Premier McGuinty tried to use his HST as cover to sneak in the eco tax on more than 9,000 items Ontario families use each and every day: 9,000 items, and it was snuck in. Now, there's never been a government program in the history of Ontario that I am aware of—and I go back in this House a long time, a long time before I was elected. I used to read Hansard as a teenager.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** That's sad.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** That is sad. My grandfather was a member of the House in those days, and the Hansard was around the house and I would pick it up and see what my grandfather said in the House. That was part of my childhood. But I never, never, never remember a program being introduced by a government that wasn't accompanied by at least one press release.

The old way of doing business in government was that if you had an unpopular program, you would introduce it at the end of June or the middle of December. Those are two times of the year when people weren't paying that

much attention. At the end of June they were getting ready to go on holiday, and in the middle of December, of course, they were caught up in the Christmas rush. So those were the two times of the year that you introduced it. You put out a small press release late on a Friday afternoon, and it would slip through with maybe one story, maybe no coverage whatsoever. It was a good time to slip in an unpopular program. Of course, Premier McGuinty did just that. In late June, he got ready to introduce the eco tax, on July 1, under cover of the HST, but he forgot to put out even a small press release on that last Friday. And when he forgot to put out that small press release on that last Friday, he was trying to sneak it in. He was sneaking it in. Again, I was very disappointed that a Premier of Ontario would take that kind of action, because it casts a pall on all politicians. It was a sad day when that happened.

Now, those 9,000 items that came in on the eco tax—there they are. I'm prepared—oh, I've only got four minutes left. I guess I can't read very many of those, but there they are, and I would expect that many of you are familiar with them. If you aren't familiar with them, I would recommend their reading, because—you know, a lifetime ago, I used to run an IGA store, and in that IGA store I had about 7,500 items; different facings, as they were called. Yet here's 9,000 items that are covered by the eco tax. It's a huge number of items. It isn't a small tax that was introduced by somebody on a whim; it's a huge tax. It was poorly introduced, and most of it—some of it—was withdrawn.

We are hearing on this side of the House, and I'm sure you're hearing it on that side of the House as well, the struggles from Ontario families that they're going through each and every day trying to make ends meet. Thanks to Premier McGuinty, Ontario families are faced with increased taxes through tire taxes—a new tire tax the Premier introduced. He introduced eco taxes. He introduced electronic taxes. He introduced a diamond tax on the diamond mine—after it had opened; he changed the rules. That made him really popular in the international community. He has hidden hydro taxes. He has destination marketing taxes and higher beer taxes. He has higher wine taxes. He has higher taxes on spirits, just to name a few.

The harmonized sales tax is costing Ontarians about \$3.4 billion a year. Ontario health premiums are costing about \$3.1 billion a year. The business tax increases are costing \$1.2 billion a year. Now, the government talks about reducing business taxes, but in that reduction, it's pennies on the dollar of the increase that he put through prior to that. The debt retirement charges on Ontario Hydro: almost \$1 billion. Income tax hikes are \$900 million. Property tax hikes amount to \$450 million. There's a hidden hydro tax of \$53 million, eco fees of \$39 million, electronic taxes \$71 million, and the tire tax—a little innocuous tire tax—that is generating \$70 million to the coffers of Ontario. Do you know what Premier McGuinty says after each one? "Cha-ching. Cha-ching."

Last week, the McGuinty Liberals voted down a motion calling on the Premier to reject a tax increase. They



had an opportunity right in this House to do that, but he refused to do it.

Madam Speaker, I would like to add a second amendment to this bill: that the amendment be amended by adding the following: "or more hidden fees, or a revival of eco taxes planned by the Liberal government."

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Mr. Chudleigh has moved a second amendment, that the amendment be amended by adding the following: "or more hidden fees, or a revival of eco taxes planned by the McGuinty Liberals."

Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to enter the debate tonight, even though it's late. It's almost 10 to 9 in the evening. I hope that people who are still watching us are not tired. Certainly, I'm tired. All of us started early in the morning and we had a lot to do during the day. But I was energized by this debate after I listened to many different speakers from both sides of the House speaking about the most important things for Ontarians: taxation, the HST and many different elements which people talk about all the time and want to discuss and explain.

**2050**

I listened to the member from the opposition speaking a few minutes ago, and he spoke about many different elements. As you know, we came into government in 2003. At that time, the economy wasn't that great. Despite all the closures—almost 28 hospitals were closed by the Conservative government, and between 10,000 and 11,000 nurses fired. There was a war on schools and teachers in the province of Ontario. It was a chaotic situation, with instability everywhere—fighting between teachers and the boards of education and the Ministry of Education and the parents. All was in chaos. Despite the price of the dollar—it was almost 64 cents back then, which means, as you know, we traded a lot with the United States, which was good for the Ontario economy, supposedly. The price of a barrel of oil was about \$50 to \$65 per barrel. All of these conditions surrounded the economy, and the Conservative government ran a deficit for the people of Ontario.

As I mentioned, the closure of 28 hospitals would save billions of dollars; firing more than 10,000 nurses would save a lot of money. They cut from all the vulnerable people and cut welfare by 25% to 35%, the least privileged people in the province of Ontario, to save some money. They sold a lot of assets of the government, including the 407. And all the selling and saving and cutting and firing and laying off and the price of oil and the price of the dollar—despite all these conditions surrounding the Conservative government back then, they ran a deficit of more than \$5 billion.

We thought they would invest in hydro and transmission stations to produce more hydro for the people of Ontario and all of us across the province. We know what happened back then: We had a blackout, and the losses were in the billions of dollars. It scared many different companies from coming to Ontario to invest. All of us know that no company wants to come if we don't have

enough of a supply of hydro, if we don't have an efficient enough infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

I love my colleague from Beaches–East York when he's talking about the corporate tax cuts and investment to attract more companies to come to Ontario. I would like to agree with him. What's happened? I've met with so many different companies that want to come to London and invest—London, Ontario, and my riding of London–Fanshawe. The first important thing for them is to see how much they have to pay in taxes, because we're not alone in the whole world. We have a neighbouring country, the United States. Many provinces will offer more incentives, more tax cuts. They'll offer more things to attract more companies to come and open and invest in their jurisdictions, so we have to be competitive.

I remember when we were negotiating with a company that wanted to come from Germany. The first thing they asked us in the city of London was, "What's the incentive? What's your tax base?" They were going to hire 1,000 people in the province of Ontario, in the London area, and they asked us about the supply of hydro and they asked us about the supply of Internet and high technology. They asked us about the supply of water and they asked us about the supply of skilled workers. We had to answer all of those questions before we told them, "Yes, come to London, Ontario; yes, come to Ontario to open. We have all that you asked for in this province." Because as I mentioned, we're not alone on this planet. There are other states in the United States that can offer more. But most of the time they come because they know we have a good price for electricity, we have an attractive record of supply of electricity at the present time due to our investment in infrastructure, for our energy in the province of Ontario, and also because we have a great record of graduates from colleges and universities; we have the ability to supply them with what they need. Because in the end, all the factories and the companies that want to come to Ontario right now or open anywhere are looking for highly skilled workers, highly skilled people who can feed those factories, can run those companies, because all those companies are now high-tech, as I mentioned. If we don't provide them with all this stuff, they're not going to come to Ontario.

When we're talking specifically about the HST—when I was talking about the HST a long time ago, I was afraid. I wasn't a fan of the HST, because there were a lot of question marks about the HST. But when I learned about the benefits of the HST for the business community—also, the member from Beaches–East York mentioned small businesses. My brother is a small business person who runs a business in London, Ontario. Many others, from coffee shops to restaurants to variety stores to all of the small business community across the province of Ontario, benefit from the HST, because they save a lot of money. One of the savings comes as an result of combining the PST and GST. We're saving the duplication of filing papers. We save almost \$500 million for the people of Ontario, for the business community.

The incentive in hydro prices for the business community is also a big factor. I also want to say that in order



to make that transition happen, our government invested more than \$4.5 billion—and also to support families. Almost 93% of the total population of Ontario received income tax cuts. I think that speaks volumes about the benefit they get from the HST.

In the meantime, almost 90,000 people don't have to pay any personal income tax as a result of the HST, and almost the total population who make less than \$160,000 receive supplement cheques in order to get them through that transition period, in order to absorb the cost of the HST as a transitional payment.

I think the HST is a normal thing to do, because if you tour the planet, many different jurisdictions, and all the high industrial society, have only a single tax, one tax. I was wondering—you know, I was born in Lebanon. When I came to Canada, I was shocked when I saw one PST and one GST. One goes to the federal government, one goes to the provincial government, and this one has PST, that one doesn't have the PST. It was confusing, for me and for many others. I always thought, "Why don't we have one tax?" I think that tax was the HST.

I know sometimes the opposition refers to the HST as an additional tax. I want to use my time to tell the people of Ontario that it's not an additional tax. Some 83% of the total items that we buy will be the same: no effect, no changes, no increase; they will remain the same. I agree that there are some changes to almost 17% and some services will be affected by the HST, but as a result of that, to eliminate that fact and absorb it, we introduced a tax cut for almost 93% of the total population, and all the vulnerable people, according to food banks and many other specialists and economists—they said it will benefit the vulnerable people in our society, because they won't be subject to any taxation. All of this was put in place to attract more business to come to Ontario, to open more factories, to open more companies.

Two weeks ago, I had the privilege and honour to attend an opening for a factory in London-Fanshawe. That company is called Kaco. It's a German solar company. They came and opened. I was with the Honourable Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and also the Honourable Attorney General, Chris Bentley. We were at the opening, and the owner and CEO of the company stood up and made a speech. You know what he said in that speech? His name is Ralf Hoffman, the CEO of KACO. He came from Germany and he said, "Ontario is the best place to invest. If I'd known about the circumstances of the economy of Ontario, about the Green Energy Act, I wouldn't have opened at the beginning in Los Angeles, United States, I would have come to Ontario. The terms, conditions and circumstances in the province of Ontario are a lot better than Los Angeles and the United States." They come to London, they come to Ontario because we have all the elements they're looking for to have a successful business.

**2100**

Also, today, this afternoon, I had the chance to meet a company from Russia. They want to come to Ontario to invest and open, and build a high-tech robotic system.

They told me they toured many different provinces, many different nations, and they found Ontario is the best place to invest because the government of Ontario—we have paid attention to those investments through our innovation fund, our economic fund, our attractive ability to persuade them to come, our taxation system, our people who are well educated and able to supply those companies and factories, our environment, our health care, our education. All these elements create good conditions to people from the whole planet to come and invest.

Last week—it was in the news everywhere; everybody heard it—57,000 jobs being created in Canada, and the majority of those jobs were here in Ontario. They come to Ontario. We're the leading province in the whole nation. Are we going to claim victory? No. We still have a lot of work ahead of us to do in order to accommodate all the people who live in the province of Ontario; in order to create a full recovery, even though we have a 92% recovery. If we compare ourselves to the United States, we should be happy because we're on the right path, the right track. But in the meantime, we cannot claim victory because we have to continue to work harder in order to provide more for the vulnerable people among us, to continue to fix our health care, our education system, to continue to invest in our high school and post-secondary education, to continue to invest in our infrastructure. All this will create an attractive environment, an attractive province for people to come and invest in.

Not long ago when we talked about kindergarten, the opposition thought it was a waste of money. We talked about many moms, fathers and families that would benefit from that kindergarten before and after school, because we believe strongly the future of this province cannot be built on ignorant people. It has to be that the investments start from the beginning to create an educated province; that province can lead, not for one year, 10 or five, but for generations to come, for centuries to come. Our investment goes towards the kids in the province of Ontario to create an educated province, an educated community and educated forces.

We also continue to invest in health care. In health care, it's important to tell people who work hard, "You have a place to go to. You have a doctor to go to. You have a hospital where you can get treatment"—and it's the best treatment on the whole planet.

All the indications are talking about our ability to provide by creating a lot of spots across the province of Ontario for the people when they graduate from high school to have good colleges and good universities to go to.

Last week, I was part of an event with the Honourable Minister Bentley and Honourable Deb Matthews at Fanshawe College to open a transportation centre. I think the Honourable Bob Chiarelli was there not long ago in this centre. You know what? It's incredible: the most green centre in the whole nation. This centre will accommodate almost 1,500 students and all the lighting, all the technology—the best and the latest technology you can find. All this investment is due to our investment in col-



leges and universities, because we want the best students to graduate. We want to give them the best opportunity to graduate; we want to give them the best environment to be able to study and produce and be successful.

Last week, the indication about the graduation percentage and stats was that almost 82% of the total people of the province of Ontario graduate. I think it's an incredible achievement.

It doesn't matter what we talk in about here. We paint a very dark picture about the province of Ontario; as a matter of fact, I'm proud to be an Ontarian. I'm proud to be here and I'm proud to be a part of a government that leads the way in order to have a brighter future, to have a vision that can accommodate all the people in the province of Ontario, wherever they come from.

The honourable member on the opposite side was speaking a few minutes ago about the eco fee. He called it a tax. They forgot that in 2002 it was introduced by the Conservative government. We don't call it a tax; we call it a fee. And you and I and many others who went downstairs to the dining room last week were greeted by Stewardship Ontario, which manages those fees. You and I and all the people have a great and vast interest to protect our environment, not to let the tires go in the field and burn in the field. We also don't want the computers, all those electronic machines, to also go in the landfill, because it will be toxic. We don't want it to go there. We're also talking about all these toxic elements. We don't want them to go to the fields, and this was introduced by the Conservative government.

It's not a tax. It's a fee. It goes to Stewardship Ontario to manage the waste of those electronics. We supported it. We want it to be there, because we want to protect the environment. It was a good measure, a good step. That's why we support good steps. We go against bad steps.

Talking about health care, of course I'm proud of health care. We have built more than 18 hospitals across the province of Ontario. We have more than 10,000 nurses across the province of Ontario. We keep progressing in this regard because we believe the only way we can support the people of Ontario is when we keep our health care open and accessible and in the public domain—not privatized. That's what we believe in. Not closing hospitals; opening hospitals. Not firing nurses; hiring nurses. We believe in our health care system and we believe in our people.

That's why it's very important for us to do whatever we can to reform our taxation, to reform our hospitals, to reform our infrastructure, to reform our education, because we want to work. You know what? We are up to huge competition. We are only 13 million and we are competing with China, with 1.5 billion, and with India, 1.2 billion. So in order to be able to compete nationally and internationally, we have to educate our people. We also have to make sure they're healthy. We want to make sure they have a place to go.

That's why a long time ago we introduced the Open Ontario plan to attract many people to come here to study, because we have the best institutions due to our

investment. We have the best place. We can educate the whole planet, and we invite people to come.

I also hear a lot from the opposition talking about the Samsung deal, a "\$7-billion giveaway." I don't understand it. The Samsung company is coming to Ontario to invest \$7 billion. We're not giving them \$7 billion. They are coming to invest \$7 billion in our economy. They will hire almost 16,000 strong and educated people of Ontario. They want to invest here. We saw the result of that from Ingersoll, London, Windsor, Tillsonburg, Kitchener, Waterloo, Ottawa and everywhere. The investment is going to benefit every corner of the province of Ontario.

Most importantly, we're creating a wave of green energy—a tradition, a culture, that wasn't there before. Wherever you go right now you see a solar system above the roofs in hundreds of cities and towns as a great indication of our success in this regard. We've created that wave, and I believe that wave will never stop, despite what the opposition said, because the people are determined. The people of Ontario are smart and able to distinguish between what is bad and good for them. That's why I'm supporting this motion. Despite what everybody said, we are on the right track. Hopefully people will decide in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

2110

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Let me start off by just referring to the motion that's on the floor. It's from government notice of motion number 74: "That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario families and help our economy remain strong, Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth..." Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth. Let's just see, let's take a look at the tax plan for jobs and growth.

Here's a chart from Stats Canada. It shows the public sector job creation and the private sector job creation by the Liberal government from October 2003 to March of this year. It shows a very large column on one side and a much smaller column on the other side. The large column is public sector jobs; 300,000 net, new public sector jobs have been created. They've actually been created by this Liberal government. During the same course of time, there have been 103,000 private sector jobs that others have created in this province. So we have 103,000 new wealth-producing jobs in this province created by the private sector, and we have 300,000 new wealth-consuming jobs created by the Liberal government.

This didn't happen just by coincidence. There is a reason for it, and it does have something to do with their plan for taxes. Under the Liberal McGuinty government since 2003, they have created the harmonized sales tax, which has been a debt burden on the taxpayers of this province of \$3.1 billion per year. They have created the Ontario health tax premium, which has been a burden on Ontario taxpayers of \$3.1 billion per year; business tax increases of \$1.2 billion per year; debt retirement charges of \$931 million per year; income tax hikes of \$900 million dollars per year; property tax hikes of \$450 million



per year; the hydro tax of \$53 million per year; the eco fees of \$39.4 million per year; electronic taxes of \$71.2 million per year; and tire taxes of \$70.2 million per year, for a grand total of \$10 billion per year taken from hard-working Ontario taxpayers to fund this Liberal government's tax plan for jobs and growth.

Job growth? Some 300,000 new public sector, wealth-consuming jobs and 103,000 new wealth-creating, private sector jobs. Does anybody get the trend here?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The ratio's all wrong.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The ratio is a little bit wrong. We should be creating more private sector, wealth-producing jobs than public sector jobs. But that is what an additional \$10 billion per year in taxes buys the taxpayers of this province: a debt for all our children to carry, a yoke for all our children to be burdened with because of this Liberal government.

Of course, let's not forget that when the Liberals brought in and announced this HST—does everybody remember this? This HST was going to create half a million new jobs. Some 500,000 new jobs were going to be created by this Liberal government bringing in the HST. Surely we all must recognize that if that indeed was correct, if an 8% additional tax was going to create 500,000 new jobs—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** We should have had more tax.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —why did they stop at 8%? Why didn't they go to 10% or 12%? Maybe they could have had a million new jobs. Really, why not go to 100%, and then we could have full employment? Just tax everybody and everything, and we would have full employment, right? I think there are other countries, in the past, that have tried things like that, but realized that it doesn't work. But this Liberal government doesn't recognize that it doesn't work. They just continue on and on.

I really have to make mention here: Previously, the minister of imagination and creativity was up speaking. He informed the House of the grand revelation that the Niagara region produced 80% of all our renewable energy in this province.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Amazing.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Amazing. An amazing revelation. The next thing I know, I think we're going to see—maybe he'll announce that 100% of photosynthesis comes from the sun. I'm not sure. But this is a minister of this crown, wanting to give us economic lessons.

Like my colleague before, I want to start by reading a quote from Premier McGuinty from April 4, 2011. It's from Hansard: "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." Now, let's talk about Premier McGuinty's record, because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds for Ontario should he be re-elected, which we all know is pretty slim.

Before the 2003 election, he promised he would not lower taxes but he would not raise them either. And on September 11, 2003, prior to that year's provincial election, Premier McGuinty signed a pledge that was called the taxpayer protection promise. Now, if anybody on the Liberal benches forgets that, I do have it up on my

website and I also have it up on my Facebook. It's a nice picture of the Premier signing that pledge, but I've given the members opposite a little option: I have little bubble notes that are blank above them, and you can fill in whatever you like in those bubble notes.

Let me read that pledge into the record. It says, "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise that if my party is elected as the next government, that I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the ... consent of Ontario voters...."

We all remember that. We all remember those commercials, the ones he ran—more than 200 different commercials during that election campaign—and we all know that signing that pledge helped get Premier McGuinty get elected. And we all know what happened next: He forgot everything that he pledged. It was as if he never even signed the pledge. As soon as he got here, he signed in the biggest tax increase—the health tax, \$3.1 billion; the largest tax grab up until that time in the history of Ontario, taking over \$3 billion. This is, again, part of his tax and jobs plan.

In 2007, he did it again. Before the 2007 election, Premier McGuinty emphatically denied that he would increase taxes. When told that his critics wouldn't believe him, he said, "They're wrong. They're wrong. They're wrong." But after the election, and with no warning, he broke his promise once again and brought in the \$3-billion HST tax grab, another \$3-billion tax grab. HST on hydro bills is one of reasons why hydro costs are skyrocketing and why industry is leaving this province.

I should just go back to those jobs numbers, and those are from Stats Canada: 300,000 new public sector jobs, 103,000 private sector jobs, and a negative loss, a negative 277,000 manufacturing jobs under Premier McGuinty's watch.

2120

On the very same day that he brought in the HST, on July 1 of last year, 2010, Premier McGuinty tried to use his HST as a cover, as a façade, to hide and sneak in another new tax, the eco tax, on more than 9,000 new items that Ontario families use every day. It's quite a list: 9,000 new fees for things like cement concrete mix, primer cement, easy flow primer cement, concrete mix countertop, cement quick set. It even has lock sets—lock sets were included in this. How often do we recycle our doorknobs? Well, I think the doorknobs would have to answer that question for me. There are over 9,000 items in here, including—every doorknob in the province is subject to the Liberal eco tax.

We're hearing about the struggles from Ontario families each and every day. I've raised them up in this House many, many times. Many times I've stood up here and spoke on behalf of my constituents who send me their hydro bills, and they're crying out and pleading for help and assistance from the high cost. I think tomorrow—it was interesting. I got a call from a constituent in a neighbouring riding. She's pleading that somebody help her with her hydro bills. You know what was interesting? She says, "You helped my parents, and I called



my MPP, but she hung up on me.” I said, “Well, who is that?” It was the Minister of Education, the member from Hastings, who would not deal with her constituent. I’m going to bring that up in the House tomorrow so you can all see just what you’re doing to the people of this province.

But it didn’t end there. With these electronic taxes, tire taxes, diamond taxes, hydro taxes—the list is endless—over \$10 billion per year is sucked out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families. And to pay for what? To pay for their tax plan for jobs and growth. What a load of nonsense that we’re hearing from this Liberal government. It is an absolute, absolute travesty, I think we all recognize, that this Liberal government even brought this motion forward. They must have thought that they were going to be able to pull the wool over somebody’s eyes with this motion. But nothing will happen like that. People are cognizant. People are reasonable, intelligent and can see through the nonsense of this political motion.

Of course, just last week, the McGuinty Liberals voted down one of our motions, calling on the Premier to reject any new tax increases. You know why?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No. Because the Liberals are keeping their options open on more taxes. That’s what their tax plan is all about—tax plan for jobs and growth; public sector jobs, wealth-consuming jobs.

Then, on Wednesday, the finance minister said that the McGuinty government will not raise or lower taxes. Now, have we not heard that story once or twice before? We’ve all heard that. That’s exactly what the Premier said back in 2003. And now we have this completely contemptible motion that’s been brought in the House today. This Liberal government is interested in taxes, taxes, taxes. That’s all this motion is about: more and more taxes. Really, they are so hard-wired and addicted to taxes, that’s what they believe the role of government is: to take money from people and provide nothing in return.

This latest promise by the Premier not to raise taxes comes at the same time that he’s more likely than ever to break his word once again. He’s already said that he isn’t going to run again after this election. Then again, maybe that’s why the finance minister moved the motion: because he’ll be the next Liberal leader to break his word about raising taxes.

But I will tell you this: It’s very comforting for ourselves and the people of Ontario to know that the Liberal word is consistent. You can’t believe it any time; you can’t believe it ever. They say one thing and they will do the opposite.

Aside from knowing that they’re going to raise taxes—because that’s just what they do; that’s what they do all the time. That’s why we have a \$17-billion deficit. That’s why we are now a have-not province. Earlier, the member for Beaches–East York mentioned how Manitoba has gained a net number of jobs after the recession—15,000—and we are still at a net loss of near 20,000 jobs since our recession. Manitoba has lifted

themselves out; Dalton McGuinty has put the thumb down, has put the heel to the people of Ontario, and he won’t stop the runaway spending that we’ve seen time and time and time again.

Now we’re going to see that he’s added new spending, tried to sneak another one in with his OPSEU deal. And of course the Minister of Finance said, “This was a great deal, but we just had to keep it secret from everybody. We just had to keep it secret because it’s such a good deal.” I heard the member from the Liberal side saying earlier that the Samsung deal is a modest deal. Well, why aren’t you opening the books and letting us see how modest that deal is?

McGuinty has grown the debt and he’s on track to completely double it. We’d like to point out that it took 23 Premiers 136 years to accumulate Ontario’s first \$148 billion in debt. Premier McGuinty will single-handedly double that number in just eight years, and what do we get for it?

Now, before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Premier McGuinty are making more promises. Let me read again from that Hansard quote that Premier McGuinty said on April 4, 2011: “A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past.” And that is why Ontario families won’t buy your false promises, your false pledges, any longer. They want a guarantee, and the only guarantee that is solid is a guarantee from the Progressive Conservative Party and our leader, Tim Hudak.

When it comes to taxes, there’s only one guarantee that Premier McGuinty will give them, and that is that he’ll raise taxes, raise taxes and continue to raise taxes. The Ontario PC government will take a different approach. We will guarantee that there will be respect for the taxpayers of this province. We will show the people of this province that a PC Party will indeed get us back on the right track, get the number of jobs on those charts back in the right direction, and show the people of Ontario once again that growth comes with the Progressive Conservative Party.

2130

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I’ve been listening carefully to the debate this evening and earlier this afternoon. What I want to do first is to start off slowly, by telling people what I’m going to do and what I’m going to talk about, and then make sure that we know what we’re talking about, which is the motion before us.

The Honourable Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance, moved “that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that to make life easier for Ontario families and help our economy remain strong, Ontario’s tax plan for jobs and growth, as reaffirmed in the 2011 budget, removes”—removes—“90,000 Ontarians from the income tax rolls, provides 93% of Ontarians with a permanent personal income tax cut, maintains the harmonized sales tax at the current rate and provides \$12 billion in tax relief for families and \$4.8 billion in tax relief for businesses; and



“Recognizes that with Ontario’s tax plan for jobs and growth, the economy is turning the corner by creating more than 293,000 new jobs since the global recession; and

“Rejects the introduction of a carbon tax as a measure that would hurt Ontario’s economic growth; and

“Rejects an increase to the HST rate or a decrease to the rate that would benefit the wealthiest Ontarians the most, take \$3 billion out of health care and education funding and harm Ontario’s economic recovery.”

I don’t think that’s a problem. I think that’s a statement that we’re trying to show. The motion indicates the direction of the government.

I’m ready and prepared to do three things: I’m going to speak to the motion, I’m going to outline the government’s action to date, and provide some contrast to the Tory party’s habit of not acknowledging the history before 2003. I’m going to sit back and provide you with those opportunities.

The first thing I’m going to do is to say that leading economists from the province of Ontario and Canada say that our comprehensive tax plan will create an estimated 600,000 net new jobs. That’s not us saying that; these are leading economists.

Nine out of 10 taxpayers are now paying less income tax; 90,000 low-income Ontarians are no longer paying Ontario personal income tax. The average Ontarian family is receiving an income tax cut of approximately \$355 this year and every year going forward—\$12 billion of tax relief for Ontarians over three years.

Our tax changes are supported: The Daily Bread Food Bank and The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives have supported this tax plan.

The children’s activity tax credit provides up to \$50 per child per year and \$100 per child with a disability. The Ontario energy and property tax credit provides up to \$1,025 for seniors and \$900 for non-seniors in annual relief. There’s even more relief through the Ontario clean energy benefit, which provides a benefit equal to 10% of the total cost of electricity on residential, farm and small business bills, including the tax. That’s after you add it all up; then you take 10% off. The northern Ontario energy benefit: up to \$200 per family and \$130 per single person.

The tax package itself provides \$4.8 billion in tax cuts for businesses. The HST will save businesses more than \$500 million per year in paperwork costs in the province of Ontario alone. We’ve cut Ontario’s tax rate for new business investment by half, as acknowledged by chambers of commerce across the province.

Since taking office in 2003, we have helped more than one million more Ontarians get a family doctor, hired over 11,000 nurses, reduced wait times for health care under some areas and added 171 new drugs to the formulary, including 35 cancer-fighting drugs. We’ve added 8,000 more long-term-care beds. Almost five million Ontarians have access to electronic medical records. We’ve reduced the cost of generic drugs by at least 50% and are phasing out—phasing in, sorry; that’s the Tory

plan. We’re phasing in full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds, which is really welcomed by the vast majority of Ontarians in the province of Ontario.

Test scores, on an average of 14%, have gone up in reading, writing and math. Graduation rates are now 79%: 52,500 more kids graduated than would have had the graduation rate remained at the 2003 level. There are 200,000 more students in post-secondary education now than in 2003, a 36% increase.

And something that I fought for hard, and a lot of my colleagues in rural caucus: We introduced the risk management program for farmers, liked by everybody.

So let me use the supportive quotes that are out there—not this party’s but third parties.

Michael Oliphant of the Daily Bread Food Bank in 2009 said this: “The sales tax credit is sensible and forward-looking ... and could become an important long-term piece of the economic security puzzle for poor people in the future.”

Andrew Mitchell of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, in *Not a Tax Grab After All*, said in 2009, “After looking at the numbers we find the interests of the poor are relatively well protected” with this legislation.

Roger Martin’s report: “It’s Ontario-friendly. The harmonized sales tax will increase investments by our businesses and this will create new, better paying jobs.”

Robin Boadway, the economics chair of Queen’s University, said this in October 2009: “The change will not only be good for the Ontario economy in these difficult times, it will also be done in a way that protects the most vulnerable among us. That’s why most economists favour it regardless of their political persuasion.”

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters’ Jason Myers said in 2011, on March 15: “Our economic recovery is extremely fragile. This is a time when we need to rely on business to sustain economic growth. The repeal of corporate tax reductions would not only stymie investment, it would raise taxes on job creation” at a time that it is most needed.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters’ Ian Howcroft said on January 31, 2011: “The combination of tax measures including the corporate tax reductions and the HST will help drive economic growth and ultimately job creation in Ontario. These were bold initiatives at a time when such actions were desperately needed to avoid catastrophe.”

And the Economic Club of Canada, in a letter signed by 32 prominent economists and professors in June 2010, said this: “The HST will enhance competitiveness, encourage new investment, and create jobs. It represents sound public policy.”

Speaker, I’ve got another quote and I’m wondering if you can guess who said this: “We understand how that (single sales tax) can help the economy.” It was said in Don Valley West on March 24, 2009, at the Conservative Party annual meeting, by one Tim Hudak.

“I agree that there’s little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales taxes.”



Who said that? It was at the Economic Club of Toronto, April 23, 2009: Tim Hudak.

Oh, and the Ontario PC Party wrote in their 2009 pre-budget submission, "The official opposition calls on this government to heed the call of the federal government and take immediate action to fix Ontario's uncompetitive tax structure." Oh, but that was then; this is now. My goodness gracious. And our tax reform is supported by and encouraged by the cousins in Ottawa: Tilson, Clement, Baird, Flaherty and the Prime Minister, who offered a deal of over \$4 billion for us to move to this new tax that's put on the entire country.

Over 140 countries and four of our provinces are now using this. I would think, in terms of the competitive argument, it's not an argument anymore; it's over. If you don't stay with this, we're in deep trouble. If you reduce it, you're removing \$3 billion for every point you reduce it.

So my question is this—and watch out for the code words, the code phrases. We hear what's being said by the opposition, and they say stuff like, "We're going to take care of your pocket. We want to reduce your taxes." But they don't finish the rest of the sentence. How are they going to get there? One point off the HST is \$3 billion. The question I have that doesn't ever get an answer in this House is, how are they going to do that? What are they going to do to find the \$3 billion?

2140

The next question I ask is, they're talking about the health tax. How is the health tax going to be removed? That's how much money? Anybody take a guess. About \$4 billion.

That's \$7 billion we're up to now. How are they going to find the \$7 billion?

Do you remember what happened the last time the Tories were in charge? Slash and burn, slash and burn. The jobs that they were talking about at the public sector: Guess what those jobs were. Nurses, teachers, doctors, and they're going to sit back and say, "We don't need them."

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** And meat inspectors.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** And meat inspectors and water inspectors—those too. I saved those ones for another point. My point is, they're classified as red tape. That's red tape: meat inspectors, water inspectors. That's red tape: "We've got to get rid of that red tape. You're stopping business from happening, so we'll get rid of the meat inspectors. We'll get rid of the water inspectors."

Let me offer you a couple of more pieces of contrast before 2003. Before 2002 was finished, over \$600 million was paid to advertise the government—\$600 million. To this point, we've only spent about \$300 million in eight years in advertising. What a big contrast that was. And who put the first piece of legislation that said you can't plaster, almost like a marketing campaign, the picture of the Premier all over? We used to say "Mike Harris built this highway." Do you remember that? You would drive down the highway and you would see, "Mike Harris built this highway."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** That's right. How many hospitals got closed?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Twenty-eight.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Twenty-eight. What was said before that? They like to use that phraseology. What was said before that? "It's not my intention to close hospitals." They closed 28.

And nurses: How many nurses got let go?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ten thousand.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Ten thousand—so we got those numbers down.

What I'm talking about is the contrast between the two. What we're looking at is speaking specifically to this.

Speaking specifically to this motion, I have a story to tell you about the riding. In the riding I come from, we saw the Green Energy Act, we saw the greenbelt, we saw Places to Grow and we recognized that if you drew a spot on the map, you would find, as Walter Gretzky says, the centre of the universe. The economic engine was ready to go off and we wanted to be prepared for it, so what did we do? We got together. Through the chamber of commerce, we got together with all of the local chambers of commerce. We got together with the mayor of Haldimand, the mayor of Norfolk, the mayor of Brant, the mayor of Brantford, the chief of the Six Nations, the MP for Brant—the MP for Haldimand–Norfolk refused—the MPP for Haldimand–Norfolk, and myself. We showed up for a big press release. We took a boat down the Grand River and we had local, regional and provincial news attached and said that we were the green energy hub, because all of those people recognized the value of the Green Energy Act and the green economy. Every one of those people who showed up indicated their support for the Green Energy Act and the fact that we wanted to make it the green energy hub. For those who are really interested, I could put those pictures on the website too of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk being supportive of that initiative. Isn't that interesting? And they want to shut it all down. As a matter of fact, we've got a few of the Old King Coals over there. They still want to believe that coal has a way to survive.

In essence, what we're talking about here are regions in the province of Ontario that have already stepped up and said clearly that the new economy is the green economy. The new way to create jobs in the province of Ontario—we're not building tractors anymore. We've exorcised the demon of Massey Ferguson in my riding. Thirty years ago our entire community got decimated because they shut down Massey Ferguson, White Farm and Cockshutt. They had another place to build those things. That kind of economy was dying then and it's dead now.

What did we need to do? We needed to pick ourselves up by the bootstraps and find the economy that we're going to move towards: education, the concept of looking at the new green economy. Why did we do that? Because we needed to diversify and move away from places where we weren't going to have jobs. We need to have



that support. We need to attract those kinds of jobs that need high skills. That's why the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is working in concert with the type of economic engine we're trying to create, by providing us with the education that's necessary and the retraining that's necessary and the new economy for our high schools, allowing them to try to look for new ways in which to educate the children, to keep them interested. They're all tied in.

For us not to support this motion, what we're basically saying is, "We're going back to the future. We're going to do the old-fashioned stuff: put the money in your pocket and hope that we don't have to tell you exactly what we're going to do to your communities when we do it." For \$7 billion and counting, how are they going to find the money? They're going to do the slash and burn.

We've got the half-truth train going on right now, and I want to make sure that everybody realizes that when you choose that half-truth train, the other half of it is what we put up with for eight years with the previous Tory government. Municipalities, teachers—everybody was fighting. Why? Because it was the chaos theory: Throw enough changes around, screw around with everybody's mind, getting them mad at each other, fighting with each other. That's not the way to build a province; that's not the way to build communities. What you do is you invite them to be participants in it, to look for the new future. When you set the table for 30-year planning for Places to Grow, you allow people to have input on what their transportation systems are going to look like in the future. You're going to allow them to take a look at their health care needs and start setting out a path of where to go. The family health teams that are now out there, and the clinics, the community health centres, and nurse-practitioner-run—I'm telling you, what we're doing is opening up the books in the opposite direction. We're saying no to the chaos theory of governance. We're say no to the chaos theory and the wedge politics of old.

What we're starting to hear again—and I say, listen carefully to the code words that are being presented to us. Those code words are telling you that we're going back to the old way. I happen to think—and somebody mentioned it on the other side and I wanted to use it in my speech, and now I feel like I might have to take a shower after I say this, because what they're talking about, to me, is trusting the fair-minded people out there who listen to this, that they see that it's not about them personally; it's about their children and their grandchildren, and building a future that says clearly, "This is the direction we want to move in. We're not going to wallow in fear, and we're not going to wallow in threats and we're not going to wallow in the accusations and the finger-pointing and the gnashing of teeth and ripping of shirts." What we talk about is sensible discussions about how health care is going to look in the future, about how our economy needs to move forward and not rely on the old ways in which we used to make our money and create our jobs.

Today we want to talk about supporting a motion that makes it clear that the policy of the government is on the

right track, that the people of the province of Ontario are fair-minded and that they look to us to say, "Yes, there's a reason why we wanted to move to a new tax plan—the reforms that we made," and, "Yes, there's a way in which our health care could improve." We have more nurses hired; we're building more hospitals; we're going to the regions and asking them for their input.

Another thing that the previous government talked about: the eco fees. They have not once told you that it was about a clean environment and getting those toxic materials away from our landfill sites. But guess who implemented that program in 2002? The Conservatives. The Conservatives introduced that plan in 2002.

Guess who spent \$400 million on putting our plans together to coordinate the IT infrastructure for our hospitals to talk to each other, our doctors to talk to each other? Who spent \$400 million doing that and nothing happened? The Tories. They want to tell you about \$1 billion spent; \$400 million of it was spent by them when they initiated the plan.

It was a good idea. I think we should be coordinated in the way we speak to all of our health care providers. It should be the doctors; it should be the pharmacists; it should be the hospitals; it should be the LHINs. It should be everybody working together to build a better province. All I have to tell my friends opposite is: Show your real proof. Show your real desire. Vote for the motion.

2150

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I'll split my time with member Bob Bailey from Sarnia over here. I don't believe there's a whole lot of time now.

I just heard a member speak over there about ripping his shirt and going on. The man is crazy. I can't help it; he has gone nuts. I've never heard him speak like that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** He's not crazy; he just may look that way. I'm not qualified to say that he's crazy, so I'll have to withdraw that, okay?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** We will talk about that before I'm done, but you've pretty well heard everything on this motion, all the rhetoric and everything from—I guess you could say from both sides, but all you can do—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Willowdale is not in his seat.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** If he gets to his seat, then we'll let him heckle if he likes. I don't mind that, if he wants to heckle. But the unfortunate party is a way over there.

We've heard all about promises and more promises and the promises that have been broken, and now we have a motion here—another broken promise. We know; there's no doubt about that. If this was so important, I can't understand why it wasn't in your budget, because stuff that you put in your budget, like closing the jail in Sarnia, closing the jail in Walkerton and closing the jail



in Owen Sound—you put those right in your budget. And what you were going to do was save about \$3 million.

**Interjection:** Allegedly.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** And allegedly, at that. You're going to save \$3 million over here by closing my jail, and over here you're going to spend about \$8 million transporting prisoners all the way to penitentiaries. What a total waste. You couldn't figure that out and put it in your budget, so how would you ever expect us to believe something like this? And now you're spending the week debating something like this in the House, when there are people out there without jobs. I know that you throw all of those figures out about all of these jobs. The member from Orléans over there: He worries about the children, yet you debate something like this? Why wouldn't you be bringing in a job to help children?

This is nothing but a fairy tale. I know the member from Hamilton Mountain has a little book over there, Grimm's Fairy Tales, and she expects people to believe it. I just don't understand why you would do something—there it is. There's her book of Grimm's Fairy Tales. Why would you waste the House, and then sit until—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** You don't want to have to get up again, Madam Speaker. You let them holler all they want. It doesn't bother me. I'm used to that, so that's okay. There's no problem.

Our good hockey team in Owen Sound just beat Mississauga, and we had a lot of trouble there with a few fans, but the fans in our area were so great. We almost ran into that Toronto mentality we talk about. Mississauga, I think, is just far enough removed from Toronto that they don't get into that mentality, and then what happened tonight—we heard it. We heard it over there. One of the ministers from downtown in Toronto here: We heard his mentality, and that's what I talk about. Boy, when the people on TV see that, they'll say, "Why would we want guys like that? What kind of mentality do they have down in that city? They have one windmill there and they expect us to put them all out in the country so they could have some power down there."

I'm telling you, they don't create enough power in Toronto to create enough energy to get to a hockey game—if they really want to go to a hockey game. I don't know whether they'd want to go to the games here in Toronto. They do still have a team, I believe. I'm not quite sure of that.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Barely.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** Barely, yes. The member from Peterborough say, "Barely."

The problem is that they've come up with a solution like this. I don't know what you even call it. It's not a bill. It's a resolution, which, as you know, Madam Speaker, on resolutions—they don't live up to resolutions. I don't know of any government that lives up to the resolutions that are passed in here, and that's a problem. So now we've got one here. After the election, they don't have to live up to it anyway. We did hear all of those

promises right on the television: "I will not raise your taxes."

The whole thing stems from the fact that the leak came from the Liberals: that if they got elected, they would be raising the HST to 15% and probably up to 20%. They're so upset that that leak came out of their offices—their generals leaked it out to the people. So, "We have to come up with something to cover it." But do you think—a promise like this—that anybody is going to pay any attention to you, after what you've done out there to the people? I mean, come on, folks; where do you think they'll ever even listen to this?

You've got two weeks left in this House. Is this what you want to debate for our last two weeks in this House? I can't believe that, when there are so many other problems out there: the hydro mess you've got us into, the HST mess. I've seen what happened: Somebody brought to the attention of the media that you're going to raise the HST, if you happen to get elected in the next election, right up to 15% and maybe 20%. Because here's the problem: You've got a \$17-billion debt—a \$17-billion debt in one year. No one's done that. No one.

I was here. I was elected in the 1990s. The NDP actually were in a recession. They unfortunately put us \$10 billion in debt every year, but that was only \$10 billion; you guys have done \$17 billion in one year. What was it, \$19 billion last year? That's why you don't even have any money, so no wonder you're going to raise the HST to 15%. No wonder you may go to 20% with that HST. You'll just be hoping that the gas goes up, because look at the money you're raking off people on that. You must just be in there counting. I'm sure you guys have to help the Treasurer count all this money that he's getting in.

Then you come up, you bring in a budget and you don't even mention this in the budget. Where were your spin doctors when that came out, boys and girls over there? You should have been thinking about that back then, but you waited until some of your spin doctors released the percentage you're going to put it up, and that got you into trouble, didn't it? It's not even in Grimm's Fairy Tales. It's not in there. You forgot to put that in there. Their little fairy tale book; it's not there.

Then you come up with it now and debate it in the second last week of the House. I don't think anyone is even going to listen to it because of the promises broken in the past. We heard that wise man, the Premier, say how the future is what happens in the past. Well, boy, we're in deep trouble with you guys. Let me tell you, this is really something.

Then you come up with this: "Oh, we can save \$3 million. Let's close the jails up in Owen Sound and Walkerton and down in Sarnia." It doesn't make any sense to do that. There are no jails up there, but, "Oh, hey, we've got all kinds of them along the 401, so we're not going to worry about anybody outside of that area. Then, we're going to save \$3 million." Holy cow. We're only \$17 billion in debt. The problem is over here, you're saving \$3 million and over here, you're spending \$8 million to truck all the prisoners to Penetang. You didn't think about that.



So why weren't you thinking about something here and something about the HST before you got yourselves in a bit of a mess? Now you're in this mess and you don't know how to get out of it. So "Let's put a resolution on the table. Let's let them debate that for the final week here because we won't get caught on it." So you're going to do the dumb thing. As I've said to everybody: "A dumb thing coming out of Queen's Park."

Close some jails where there aren't any around there, in the middle of winter. That's the trouble: your mentality. We talked about the mentality here in Toronto. If you knew what it's like out in rural Ontario—and surely some of you guys that live out in rural Ontario understand that. You should understand in Peterborough. You should understand those things.

What are we going to do in the middle of winter? The roads are blocked and you've got to have courts. You build a new courthouse. You fix up the one in Walkerton. Now you're not going to have a chance to put people there because half the time over in Port Elgin, they're snowed in. So how are we going to get them?

You know what's going to happen: You're going to put them up in hotels, pay the police to stay there and you're going to lose more. We said you might spend \$8 million; it'll probably be more like \$10 million or \$12 million to save \$3 million. That's the kind of things you do on the Liberal side: Save \$3 million here, spend \$8 million or \$12 million over here. Well, that's Liberal economics. That's what we're talking about. "Who cares; we're only \$17 billion in debt anyway. We'll get that, because when we raise the HST to 15% and then up to 20%, we'll make that money up." That's exactly what you're doing; all you're trying to do is tell people that you won't.

Well, do you think anybody will believe you? Because you've heard all of those quotes. I'm not going to give them to you again; you must hear them at every doorstep. If you haven't heard them at every doorstep, you better get ready for October because you will be hearing them. I'm sure we'll see that smiling picture of your Premier on the television saying, "I will not raise your taxes." Oh, I can't wait to see those ads. They're going to be fun to watch.

2200

Folks, you just dropped the ball. You might as well admit it. You screwed up, and now you're trying to get out of it by a silly resolution like this—waste our time when there's so many other things there we could be looking after. I'm really disappointed in you; I thought you had a little more going for you than that, but obviously you haven't.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Sarnia—Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure this evening to rise to speak to this resolution. Obviously, my remarks won't be near as colourful as my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound's.

Like my colleagues, I want to start by reading a quote from a gentleman there. On April 4, 2011, from Hansard,

the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, the Premier, said that "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." Now let's talk about this same Premier's record because it will go a long way to predicting what the future holds for this province of Ontario, if—and I say if, and I think that's a remote chance—he is re-elected in October.

Before the 2003 election, Dalton McGuinty emphatically denied that he would not increase taxes, but he did. On September 11, 2003, prior to that year's election, Dalton McGuinty signed that famous pledge; it was called the taxpayer protection promise. Let me read that pledge into the record. It read: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: Not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the ... consent of Ontario voters...."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Was he telling the truth?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Well, I'll leave that to the viewers and the members of the gallery who are here this evening.

We all remember the commercials, the ones that the Liberal Party and he ran more than 200 times during that famous election campaign. We all know that signing that pledge helped to get Dalton McGuinty elected. We all know what happened next. The minute he got the keys to the Premier's office and found the washroom, Dalton McGuinty treated his word like it was nothing. He brought in the health tax, the single-largest income tax grab in the history of Ontario, taking over \$3 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario families.

In 2007, he did it again. Before the 2007 election, this same gentleman also promised that he would not lower taxes, but he would not raise them either. When told that his critics wouldn't believe him, he said, "They're wrong, they're wrong, they're wrong." But after the vote and with no warning, he broke his promise again and brought in the \$3 billion HST tax grab.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Never mentioned it during the campaign.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Never mentioned it once. I remember that campaign very well—went door to door, never—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's when you were elected.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** That's when I was first elected. How can I forget? How could I forget that? About a hospital—it had a lot to do with a hospital down in Sarnia and a lot of others.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Now they want to close your jail.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Now they want to close my jail. Sounds like another good issue for me.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I can't help it. They just seem to come to me that way.

But after the vote and with no warning, the same man broke his promise again and brought in the \$3 billion HST tax grab.

The HST on hydro bills is one of the reasons those bills are skyrocketing.



**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** To say nothing about the cost of gas.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Gasoline—every day, a tax on a tax on a tax.

On the very same day, July 1, 2010, Dalton McGuinty, the Premier, tried to use his HST as a cover to sneak in the eco tax on more than 9,200 items Ontario families use every day. There is a number of them here. Ladies and gentlemen of the television audience, that's just some of them right there. That's just some of them. I won't bother trying to read them; they've been read into the record before.

There are 9,320 items that the McGuinty Liberal slapped those eco taxes on. My colleagues and I are going to read a number of those items into the record there through the course of the debate, and that has happened, just to remind those Ontario families that are watching this evening that the McGuinty Liberals are hard-wired, at the end of the day, to tax, tax, tax.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And break promises; they're hard-wired there, too.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** And break promises.

We already know what his next permanent tax will be. Every year, since 2002, Ontario families have paid the debt retirement charge on their hydro bill. It was created to pay off \$7.8 billion of debt going back to the Peterson era and the Darlington overruns. A typical family pays about \$84 a year, and it was supposed to be paid off by 2012. The government's own numbers say \$7.8 billion has been collected to date. But without warning or explanation, the McGuinty Liberals announced that the debt retirement charge will be on the hydro bills of every Ontario family until 2018, but won't even tell families what the balance is. That's like getting a credit card bill every month with, "Just pay this amount. We don't know what your balance is." We asked the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. to tell us the balance; they also refused. We'll change that after October. It's like getting a credit card bill every month and being told to pay the interest with no idea of what the principal is.

We're hearing struggles from Ontario families each and every other day. It doesn't end there: Thanks to Dalton McGuinty, Ontario families are faced with increased taxes through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirit taxes, and that's only to name a few of them. I'm getting hoarse.

Here's what these costs to Ontario families are. The harmonized sales tax rings in at over \$3.1 billion; the Ontario health premium, \$3.1 billion; the business tax increases, \$1.2 billion; the debt retirement charge, \$931 million; income tax hikes have totalled over \$900 million; property tax, \$450 million; the hidden hydro tax, \$53 million; eco taxes, \$40 million; electronic taxes, over \$71 million; and tire taxes, \$70 million. And you know what the Dalton McGuinty government says after each one of these? "Cha-ching."

This is just plain wrong, and it absolutely shows no respect for families who are getting stuck with those

bills. Hold up those tables; hold up that table. Where's that book?

To top it off, the McGuinty Liberals slapped the HST to the bill, taking another \$80 million a year out of the pockets of Ontario families. Families are already paying too much for hydro thanks to the HST, the debt retirement charge, the hydro rates—up another 6%—\$18 million in illegal interest charges and the expensive energy experiments that Premier McGuinty says will hike hydro bills by a minimum of 46% during the next four years, and that's just a lowball estimate.

It doesn't end there: Thanks to Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government, Ontario families are faced with increased taxes, from tire taxes, eco taxes etc.

Last week, when the opportunity arose, the McGuinty Liberals voted down a motion calling on the Premier to reject any tax increases. Why they did that, we don't know. Because they wanted to keep their options open, Madam Speaker and viewers; anybody who's still up at this time of night and still watching. They wanted to keep their options open to increase those taxes.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The ball game's over. We have a big audience now.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** The ball game's over. I know we've got a big audience now.

Then on Wednesday the finance minister said the McGuinty government will not raise or lower taxes. Does anyone think they've seen this movie before? *Déjà vu* all over again?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** You should say, because it's exactly what McGuinty said in 2003.

Now comes the motion. It should be called, "The Liberals say they won't raise your taxes, and they really, really, really mean it this time."

This latest promise by the Premier not to raise your taxes comes at a time when he is more likely than ever to break his word. With a \$17-billion deficit and with calculations that this party has already done—on the other side, the government party is saying 1% equals \$3 billion and they've got a \$17-billion gap—five times three would be 15: about a 5% increase. You're going to look at a 5% increase. He's grown the debt and he's on track to double it. Our leader, Tim Hudak, likes to point out that it took 23 premiers 136 years to accumulate that first \$148 billion in debt.

Now, before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty are making promises once again. Let me read again that quote from Dalton McGuinty on April 4, 2011, from Hansard: "A very good predictor of the future is what has happened in the past." And that's why Ontario families don't want pledges or promises this time. They just want action and they want results, and the only way that they can get those actions and results is to throw this government out on October 6 and install a new government that understands the hardships that these people have put up with.

When it comes to taxes, there's only one guarantee, and Dalton McGuinty will give it. He'll raise your taxes.



He can't help it. That's what they always do. They're hard-wired to do that.

Ladies and gentlemen, on October 6, vote for change. Vote the Ontario PC government. We'll take a different approach. We will not raise taxes, and an Ontario PC government will lower taxes across the board to give Ontario families the respect they deserve and the rates that they need.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

2210

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I know it's late. I just want to say goodnight to my wife, Karan; my son Braden; and my daughter Shanae. In Peterborough—

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** They should be in bed by now.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** They are in bed by now, but just on the chance they happen to be watching their dad.

I want to get on the record here about this. It's interesting about history. There's a lot of talk about history here this evening. Well, I remember, in the spring of 2003, Madam Ecker, who is really a nice person, who by the way now supports the HST—but she is a lovely lady. I met her on several occasions, and she was a wonderful finance minister. But what did she say in the spring of 2003? “The budget is balanced. The budget is balanced. The budget is balanced. The budget is balanced.”

At that particular time, the opposition party, the Liberals, and the third party started to formulate their platforms based on the information that was provided by Madam Ecker. But it is interesting enough—remember that famous speech at Magna? And I know there are some members here tonight. I remember the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, the member from Halton and the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. I remember seeing them on TV as they carried their doggy bags out of Magna with their free front bumpers after the speech that evening. They all got their souvenirs.

But Madam Ecker—very fine person that she is—kept saying that the budget is balanced, so everybody was moving forward based on the information provided by Madam Ecker. Thank God, when we became the government, we brought in legislation so that the Auditor General checks the books before an election, because we know what happened. We came into power, and we asked one of the most honourable public servants in the history of this province, Erik Peters, to look at the books. Whoopee, a \$5.6-billion deficit that Madam Ecker told us never existed.

We had made commitments during the fall of 2003 based on the premise that there would be a balanced budget. We came into power, and we told Ontarians that we would invest in improved health care in the province of Ontario; we would bring in 150 family health teams in the province of Ontario; we would improve education in the province of Ontario; we would make investments in post-secondary education in the province of Ontario. So we brought in a health premium to meet those objectives.

Well, now it's 2011. The Leader of the Opposition says, “We're not going to get rid of the health premium.”

But his colleague was at a press conference—and what's that fine lady's name?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Sylvia Jones.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Sylvia Jones, the member from Dufferin-Caledon, said, “Oh, no. I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition that we're not going to really get rid of that health premium, because we'll need those dollars to pay for things going down the road.” Whoops, that's the first person under the bus.

Now, we remember the former Leader of the Opposition, John Tory, a great guy. He just came out recently and said that the HST is good tax policy, good for the future of Ontario. Whoops, he got under the bus. That's another one under the bus.

The other day we had two more of their members: Mr. Hardeman from Oxford and the member for Newmarket-Aurora. They both came out saying, “You know, that Green Energy Act may not be so bad after all,” because from the member from Oxford's perspective, it's creating new jobs in one of his communities. Then the member from Aurora—he's got shares in it. So whoops, they're under the bus now, too.

Let me tell you, these guys over there should get a Greyhound franchise. They need all the buses because they throw so many people underneath them. And the list keeps growing.

One of Canada's great war heroes, Colonel Corrigan, who lives in Ancaster, Ontario, a hero in Bosnia, the kind of person that we should stand up for and respect for what they're doing for the men and women—whoops, there's another one under the bus. This just keeps going. Under the bus, under the bus, under the bus.

**Interjection:** There's one more really important guy: Norm Sterling.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I could go on about Norm Sterling, but Norm Sterling is an honourable man, and we know what his fate was.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Please refer to the member's riding.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Let me tell you about this team they have here. I want to just refer to something here—just give me one moment. Here it is right here. This is a great headline. It was in the Toronto Star on May 7:

“Ontario Hits the Jobs Jackpot...”

“Canada's employment recovery is now almost complete after a strong April added 58,300 new jobs—almost all in Ontario—and enough good jobs to finally lift full-time work back to pre-recession peaks.”

I'd like to get in a few other quotes here. During the pre-budget submission from Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' Ian Howcroft and Paul Clipsham—here's what they had to say:

“We continue to emerge from a deep and protracted recession. Manufacturers and exporters have been impacted significantly, but there are signs of greater optimism for this sector going forward. In fact, CME's forecast for the coming year is that manufacturing investment and exports will outpace the GDP growth in 2011.”

"In fact, Canada will rely on exports and business investment to sustain the economic recovery. Export volumes are expected to expand 10%, and machinery and machine parts and equipment will increase by 16.5%. Ontario is once again leading the economic charge, based primarily on the resiliency of our industrial manufacturing base. Companies are adopting to rapidly changing circumstances, and they're taking the necessary steps to survive and thrive in a new global economy."

Here is the clincher: "Credit for the recovery is also owing to the Ontario government taking bold steps to address the challenges that are impacting manufacturers and exporters. In particular, CME strongly supports the HST, corporate tax reductions, the Smart program, significant infrastructure investments and measures to encourage skills training and development."

Of course, that's from the right wing, but let me get you one from the left wing. My good friend Ken Lewenza, national president, Canadian Auto Workers, said:

"We offer our comments and suggestions in a constructive, non-partisan spirit. We recognize the difficult and competing pressures which the current Ontario government is attempting to balance, and while we do not endorse every decision this government has made, we do wish to commend the positive initiatives that have been taken in numerous areas...."

"Extensive support for the automotive industry and manufacturing in general" and "positive environmental initiatives (including the Green Energy Act and its made-in-Ontario manufacturing strategy)."

I had the delight last Friday—the member from Durham was in the riding of Peterborough talking about taxes. I had to remind the media in Peterborough that it's a damn good thing that we provided those transition dollars for General Motors because we saved the member from Durham's executive pension. That's good that we looked after his executive pension. He's a pretty good guy, so we looked after him.

The list goes on and on. There's a lot of talk about electricity prices. Well, it's really interesting. A couple weeks ago, I asked the research people in the Legislative Assembly to look at electricity prices in six jurisdictions. Let's look at these prices.

Manitoba has lots of hydroelectric resources. For first 900 kilowatts a month in Manitoba, it is 6.3 cents. The remainder is 8.1 cents—very comparable to Ontario.

The province of Quebec has a residential tiered rate. The first 30 kilowatts in a day is 6.38 cents a kilowatt hour; the remainder is 8.1 cents. But in Quebec, if you look at time of use in the wintertime, during winter peak, it's 14.78 cents a kilowatt hour, and at all other times it's 4.46 cents.

New York state: The residential flat rate they have in New York state is 7.5 cents a kilowatt hour, and then it goes up in the evening or late in the day to 7.80 cents per kilowatt hour.

That's from legislative research, a non-partisan group that will provide the same report that they got for me. But let's look at this a little further.

Off-peak in New York state goes as high as 10.73 cents a kilowatt hour. In Michigan, it's 11.93 cents at summer peak; winter peak, almost 12.6 cents a kilowatt hour.

Do you want to hear about Pennsylvania?

**Interjections:** Yes.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Pennsylvania: 13 cents a kilowatt hour.

**Interjection:** Say it ain't so.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It is. Michigan—and I could keep going on and on.

It would be interesting in this House if we had a real debate about electricity prices, not this bunk that I think is dreamed up from time to time from the members opposite. These are the facts. You can get this from the legislative research. I'd recommend the opposition to take a look at it.

But let's look at the Samsung deal. You know, it's interesting.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I don't think we have the time.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Do we have time?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Let's look at the Samsung deal. It's really interesting. When I talk to people in my riding—I even talk to Korean War vets, who have a unique bond with the people in South Korea. They think this is an excellent investment. Four plants are to be built: three on stream already; number four to be started shortly. This is a real—Madam Speaker, you're asking me to sit down? I wish that I had six more hours, because I could keep going on and on and on.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned, unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** No further debate, Madam Speaker.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** No, there's only four of them—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Four of them?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 2222.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murdoch, Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
<b>O'Toole, John (PC)</b>	Durham	
<b>Orazietti, David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	
<b>Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)</b>	Oshawa	
<b>Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)</b>	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Prue, Michael (NDP)</b>	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
<b>Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
<b>Ramal, Khalil (LIB)</b>	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Ramsay, David (LIB)</b>	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
<b>Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)</b>	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)</b>	Davenport	
<b>Sandals, Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	
<b>Savoline, Joyce (PC)</b>	Burlington	
<b>Sergio, Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	
<b>Shurman, Peter (PC)</b>	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Sorbara, Greg (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
<b>Sterling, Norman W. (PC)</b>	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
<b>Tabuns, Peter (NDP)</b>	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
<b>Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)</b>	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)</b>	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Yakabuski, John (PC)</b>	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Zimmer, David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	
<b>Vacant</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Phil McNeely  
Yasir Naqvi, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, Sylwia Przedzdiecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek  
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedzdiecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Orazietti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark  
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones  
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craitor  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day











## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 16 May 2011 / Lundi 16 mai 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### Taxation

Mme France Gélinas.....	6015
Mr. Wayne Arthurs.....	6017
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	6019
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	6020
Mr. Michael Prue.....	6023
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	6026
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	6029
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	6032
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6034
Mr. Dave Levac.....	6036
Mr. Bill Murdoch.....	6039
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	6041
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	6043
Debate deemed adjourned.....	6044













